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LOS ANGELES

"But there is a foot way across that field which leads directly to the House, and if your honour pleases I will shew you the way."

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A

VISIT

TO THE

MANOR HOUSE;

OR, THE

TWELVE DAYS AT CHRISTMAS:

WITH

HINTS

FOR IMPROVEMENT.

"Example is Youth's best Monitor."

BY A LADY.

BRENTFORD:

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A VISIT

TO THE

MANOR HOUSE,

&c. &c.

Dialogue.

Young Herbert. ARE you quite sure, Thomas, that Mr. Bond said, the packet was arrived at Plymouth?

Thomas. Yes, Sir, quite sure; Mr. Bond was just come home from the City, with the news, and the agents, for the West

India merchants, have always the first accounts of the arrival of packets.

Young Herbert. But, perhaps, my papa may not come in this packet; he has mentioned his return, you know, so often in his letters.

Thomas. I am certain he will, if he is well, for his affairs were nearly settled when I came away; and he sent me first, that you might be sure he was coming.—The last words he said to me were,—"Thomas, tell my son that I am quite prepared for taking my passage in the next packet that sails;" and I can but think how pleased your good papa will be, to find you grown such a nice young gentleman, for you were only two years old when he left you with your God-mamma, to go to the West Indies; and now you

are in your tenth year, Master George, if I mistake not ?

Young Herbert. Yes, and I remember nothing at all about my papa; but I have heard my God-mamma say, that he was very sorry to leave me, but that he thought it right to go. If my papa does not receive Mr. Bond's letter before he arrives in London, how surprised he will be to find that I have lost my dear God-mamma; it was only six weeks ago that she wrote to him herself.

Thomas. To be sure, her death was rather sudden, but you know, Master George, she was getting in years, and had always delicate health.

Young Herbert. I know it, Thomas; but she loved me the same to the last as when

I was a little boy, and I did every thing I liked.

Thomas. It was her fondness for you when an infant that reconciled your papa to leaving you; and, I remember, he said, that he was sure Lady Rooke would be a mother to his dear little boy; and that you should remain with her till you were old enough to go to school.

Young Herbert. Ah! and I loved her like my own mamma!—She could not bear the thought of my going to school, when papa wrote about three years ago; and she entreated so much that my papa consented to my staying with her and having masters at home. But, I suppose, Thomas, I shall be sent to school now?

Thomas. I rather think you will, Master George, for I have heard your papa say,

he did not like boys being educated at home so well as at school, as they were always sure to be too much indulged.

Young Herbert. Then, I suppose, my papa is very strict; and, if he is, I shall never love him as I did my God-mamma.

Thomas. Oh! but you will love him, Master George; every one loves your papa—even the poor blacks in the Island grieve that he is leaving them. But your papa, though he is good to all, likes to see people do their duty; and I have heard him say, that young people must be taught their's, or they cannot know it. But, I hope, you will now very soon have the happiness of seeing your papa, who, I am sure, longs to see you.

Young Herbert. How long will it be,

Thomas, before papa gets to London, after he is landed?

Thomas. Why, Sir, I should think, as the packet is arrived in Plymouth harbour, that your papa may be here some time to-morrow.

Young Herbert. I shall be glad when he is come; for now that I have lost my kind God-mamma, it seems as if I had no one belonging to me.

CHAPTER I.

THE ARRIVAL.

THE calculations made by Thomas of the time his master was likely to arrive did not prove quite exact, as he came twenty-four hours sooner. The preceding dialogue had not long passed when a loud knock was heard at the door, which announced Mr. Herbert's arrival. He had lost no time in reaching London, as the letter which met him at Plymouth informing him of Lady Rooke's death made him more anxious to join his son.

After an absence of eight years, it was not likely Mr. Herbert could trace much

resemblance in his son, whom he had left an infant; but, as paternal affection can subsist, even though time and space may divide, Mr. Herbert affectionately embraced his son, saying, "I am happy once again to press my dear George to my bosom. I can, too, even fancy the same countenance, more expressive only than that I left in infancy."

"I am very happy to see you, Sir," said George; "though you find me very much grieved at the loss of my kind Godmamma; she has only been dead a month, as Mr. Bond wrote you word, I believe."

"He did, my son," replied Mr. Herbert, "and I am likewise pleased to see the regret you shew for the loss of one who has supplied a mother's place. I trust, however, the presence of a father, who loves you no less than she did, will bring you consolation. You will too, my dear George, now change your abode, which will help likewise to divert your melancholy, and I purpose taking you with me

this very evening; a house has been prepared for me against my arrival, where I am now going,—I stopped here only to embrace my son, and to take him home with me."

"Thank you, Sir," rejoined George, "but should I not stop to have my cloaths packed, and those things which my kind God-mamma gave me?"

"They can be sent to you," said Mr. Herbert, "and Thomas may now take what you immediately require."

This was, perhaps, the first time George had experienced a contradiction to his wishes, but he found he must obey, and accordingly followed his father to the chaise which was at the door, when they drove to Welbeck-Street. In a few days Mr. Herbert found himself recovered from the fatigue of his voyage, and George began to be reconciled to his new residence.

The improper indulgences to which young Herbert had been accustomed,

through the weakness of Lady Rooke, soon became visible, and he saw, with great concern, the effects likely to follow; he, therefore, determined to enter, without loss of time, on a more rational system, and firmly to oppose what he saw wrong. Fortunately it was not too late to hope the errors of his early education might be eradicated; the character was not yet formed by long established habit, and he found his son, notwithstanding the disadvantages he had laboured under, possessing good temper and good natural sense, by which the task would be rendered more easy.

The inquiry of his improvements under the masters he had had, proved, as may be supposed, little to Mr. Herbert's satisfaction. The want of application on the part of the scholar, must necessarily render the efforts of the master fruitless. George took his lessons as he liked, and continual excuses were made by him for not taking any at all. Indolence is, of all

other defects, the most difficult, perhaps, to overcome, and this was prevailing in the character of George, above all others.

"I perceive, George," said Mr. Herbert to his son, one morning, after waiting a considerable time at the breakfast table for him, "that early rising is not amongst the good rules you have been made to observe. Pray tell me at what hour you breakfasted with your God-mamma?"

"At ten o'clock," replied George.

"And how did you employ your time till that hour?" inquired Mr. Herbert.—"Was you employed in getting your lessons for your masters?"

"No, papa, that was not till after breakfast," returned George.

"Then what were you doing?—Or, rather were you doing any thing at all?" said Mr. Herbert. "I fear the time was wholly lost, and that you have not been accustomed to rise at a proper time."

George looked confused and remained silent.

"I see with great concern," continued Mr. Herbert, "the many bad habits you have contracted, George, from improper indulgence. It is plain, you have in this and every other instance been suffered to follow your own inclination; but, if you value either your health or happiness, you must overcome your indolence without loss of time. Let the effort be your own, my son, and you will spare me much anxiety."

George felt vexed at this serious reprimand, he promised he would in future be called at an earlier hour, and be in the breakfast parlour in right time.

Mr. Herbert's return to his native country was sincerely greeted by all his friends, and by none more than Sir Harry and Lady Castlemain, who resided within a few miles of Bath, and from whom Mr. Herbert now received an invitation to pass his Christmas with them; adding, that they hoped he would bring his son with him, as the young people at Brooms-

dale would be very happy to see him one of their party during the holydays.

This friendly invitation was not unwelcome to Mr. Herbert, who wished to see an old friend and school-fellow he highly esteemed. There was, likewise, another motive which had weight at the present moment—the very pleasing account he had heard of the younger part of this family, and the manner in which they were educated, gave him the hope that their good example might prove a real benefit to his son, whose many defects daily shewed how necessary it was to find some effectual means to improve him; and it was Mr. Herbert's intention, likewise, to make inquiry, in the vicinity of Bath, for a proper school to place him at.

CHAP. II.

A Country Visit at Christmas.

A CHANGE of scene, to a boy of George Herbert's age, might naturally be considered as a pleasing occurrence. To him, however, any change attended with the least exertion was disagreeable; and the idea of being exposed to the cold weather, was another objection to the country visit. At the present season, therefore, he would have preferred much remaining in Welbeck-Street, and sitting, as he had been accustomed at his dear God-mamma's, by a good fire, in a

well carpeted room; nor could he help venting a few objections to his father:—

"Do not you think, Sir, that travelling at this time of the year is very uncomfortable—it is so cold, and the country is so dreary?"

"The short journey we are taking," replied Mr. Herbert, "could not be productive of any thing very uncomfortable, even though we were to travel on the outside of a stage-coach; instead of which, we shall be snugly seated in our own post-chaise. And the novelty of the scene, George, I should suppose, would prove an entertainment to a boy of your age, and to one who has seen so little; for, I suppose, you have never yet been off the stones of London, except when you walked in the Parks, or took an airing for a couple of hours with your God-mamma. And your objection to the country, because it is winter, is equally groundless, for where there is pleasant society there can be nothing dreary, even at Christmas; and this,

I doubt not, you will find with the young family at Broomsdale-Hall."

"At any rate," resumed George, "there cannot be much walking out, for when it is frosty people fall down and break their bones. My God-mamma would never let me walk out at all when the snow was on the ground."

"Accidents, it is true, do sometimes happen," continued Mr. Herbert, "but this apprehension does not prevent people from taking proper exercise, which is necessary for the preservation of health at every season, and the cold is always most felt by those who lead an inactive life; with young people this should be particularly guarded against, for many reasons. I am sorry to see you, my son, are, at the present moment, an example of its ill-effects; for every exertion, both of body and mind, you now would gladly avoid. I trust, however, you will get the better of this indolence, owing solely to improper habit, and of which you will see no exam-

ple in children who are properly brought up. To accustom ourselves, when young, to bear the alternate changes of heat and cold, is particularly necessary for men who know not what their future occupations may be, nor in what climates they may pass their lives. Had I, my dear George, not been able to endure heat, I could not have remained in the West-Indies so many years, and reaped the fruit of my industry under its burning sun."

George, finding his father was not likely to alter his intentions, forbore making further remarks, and the preparations were accordingly made for the intended visit the middle of December.

The intermediate time was sufficiently filled up with Mr. Herbert's various concerns—in settling with his agent, calling upon old friends, ordering new cloaths, and fixing upon a new carriage; and as George at all times accompanied his father, there was no want of amusement for him; and though he sometimes found his

morning walk rather too great an exertion, yet he nevertheless saw with concern the expiration of the fortnight when they were to leave London.

The morning arrived, and, as it was a sharp frost, every precaution was taken, by George, to arm himself against the cold. Thomas was desired to give him his warmest cloaths, and the new flannel waistcoat which had been ordered for him. The time taken up in his dressing was always much too long, and this morning, having a journey to prepare for, he quite forgot the hour, notwithstanding the repeated admonitions of Thomas to make haste, or he could not be down in time for breakfast. This, indeed, was the case, for before George entered the parlour his father had finished his, and the carriage was in a few minutes after at the door, so that George had only time to take half his meal when Mr. Herbert, who was always punctual, said he was ready. The injunctions, however,

given by the young gentleman, to Thomas, to "be sure to put plenty of sandwiches and biscuits in the carriage," was not forgotten, and the deficiency of a short breakfast was soon after made up for.

Mr. Herbert had, on the present occasion, prepared himself for a longer absence from London than the time of the intended visit:—He purposed going to Bath after he left Sir Harry Castlemain's; a residence of so many years in the West Indies had impaired his health, and he thought remaining a couple of months in that city would be serviceable to him.—He hoped, likewise, to fix his son in that neighbourhood, at a proper seminary, after the Christmas recess.

The amusement which novelty seldom fails to produce rendered the journey not unentertaining to young Herbert. The carriage was a very comfortable one, and he did not feel much inconvenience from cold; his fears, however, could not allow him to forget that he was to pass over

Marlborough Forest, and he had heard it was very much infested with robbers.

"I hope," said he to his father, "it will not be dark when we get there, and that you do not intend to travel late."

"That will not be necessary," replied Mr Herbert, "as I purpose making two days, and not to arrive at the end of our journey till to-morrow afternoon. But why do you suppose that Marlborough Forest, of all other places, is the most dangerous?"

George then related what his Godmamma had told him, and how near she was being robbed on the forest, when she was going to Bath a great many years ago; that two ill-looking men, who she was sure were robbers, rode alongside the carriage, but seeing the servants were armed it prevented their designs.

"However it might be before the Forest was cut down," said Mr. Herbert. "I cannot say but at the present day there

are many other parts of the road where you are quite as likely to meet with robbers."

Nothing of the sort occurring, our travellers arrived in the afternoon of the second day within a few miles of their destination; when Mr. Herbert, looking out of the carriage window, to take a view of the country, observed, that if his memory failed not they were very near the residence of Sir Harry Castlemain, and that the turrets of the old part of the mansion would soon appear.

"I am, indeed, very glad to hear it," exclaimed George, "for it looks very lonely about this part, now we are out of the high road, and the dark is coming on fast."

At this instant the postillion suddenly checked his horses, on perceiving the road divide, and calling to Thomas, who rode on the dicky behind, said he was not acquainted with the road, and did not know whether to turn to the right or to the left.

Thomas was equally at a loss, till looking about he saw a windmill:—

"I do verily believe I remember that windmill," said he, "and if so we shall soon be at Broomsdale-Hall."

The chaise proceeded, but they soon lost sight of the windmill; upon which Thomas desired the postillion to stop, and going up to the carriage door, told his master he was afraid they had taken the wrong road, and gone to the left when they should have turned to the right.

"If so," said Mr. Herbert, "we had better not proceed further in it. But hark! did I not hear the sound of a bell, like a clock striking? If so, we must be near a village."

At this moment a countryman came in view and coming towards them Mr. Herbert called to him and said, — "Pray, friend, are we near Broomsdale-Hall?"

"You are very near the village of Broomsdale, Sir," replied the man, "but the Manor House is a mile off the coach-

road, and there is a hill too to go up;—but there is a foot-way across that field which leads directly to the house, and, if your honour pleases, I will shew you the way; you will then be at the avenue gate in a few minutes."

"Thank you, friend," replied Mr. Herbert, "that will certainly be our best plan; we will walk across the fields with you, and send the carriage round."

Mr. Herbert and his son then alighted and followed their guide, who soon entered into conversation, saying, he supposed they were the visitors who were expected at the Hall, this Christmas?

Mr. Herbert readily answered the countryman's question, and was pleased with his honest simplicity; but George, appearing rather shy of him got behind, upon which the countryman said,—

"Do not be afraid of me, young gentleman, I have worked on these grounds these twenty years, and our good Lord is kind to me and all my family, and so he

is to all; there is not a man in the village who would not serve him by night and by day.—No offence, I hope, your honour?"

"Oh! none at all," replied Mr. Herbert, "on the contrary, it gives me pleasure to hear you speak thus of my old friend, Sir Harry Castlemain."

"Who can do otherwise?" continued the countryman; "and then my Lady, she is an angel quite—always the poor man's friend, and the guardian of his orphan children. And then the young 'Squire and Miss Sophia——but here we are at the avenue gate, and I see the servants are coming to meet your honour, so that you are no longer in want of me."

The countryman then making a low bow was about to retire, but Mr. Herbert would not suffer him to depart till he had put some silver in his hand and thanked him for his civility.

CHAP. III.

THE MANOR HOUSE.

THE servants conducted the travellers to the house, and in the hall they were met by Sir Harry Castlemain, who had been expecting their arrival some hours. It was the meeting of two friends after an absence of nine years, who had been in habits of intimacy from an early age, having been at school together.

Their mutual congratulations over, Sir Harry conducted Mr. Herbert and his son to the drawing-room, where they found Lady Castlemain and the younger part of the family with Mr. Wilson, their tutor.

Her Ladyship expressed the sincere pleasure it gave her to see their old friend at the Manor-House again; and then taking his son George by the hand she led him to her young family.

Dinner, which had been waiting Mr. Herbert's arrival, was now served, when they sat down to their usual domestic meal; the eldest son and daughter, the former fourteen and the latter sixteen years of age, with the tutor, always dining with Sir Harry and Lady Castlemain.—Their social and hospitable board was, indeed, seldom without some of the neighbouring gentlemen, of whom there were several who had a general invitation whenever they liked to make one of the family party. These were considered as friendly visitors, with whom no ceremony was observed, and they, with the Rector's family, formed a pleasing variety at all times, in the domestic party at the Manor-House.

The evening was passed very pleasantly by Sir Harry Castlemain and Mr. Herbert,

who had sufficient conversation in the recollection of "things that are gone," and they considered this renewal of their former intercourse a desirable circumstance to both.

"I am much delighted," said Mr. Herbert to Sir Harry, "to find you, my friend, thus surrounded by your pleasing family, who, excepting the two elder ones, have been born since I left England. Could I hope to see my son bearing any resemblance to your's, the evening of my days would be blessed indeed."

"Why should you not?" replied Sir Harry, "he appears a very fine boy."

Mr. Herbert then related to his friend the manner in which his son had been brought up by Lady Rooke, whose affection to her God-son had been accompanied with so much weakness.—"You will too soon perceive the ill effects it has produced," said he, "and I must entreat you and Lady Castlemain will excuse him, and that you may not repent the kind invita-

tion you have given us; though, I fear, you will consider a boy who has been so improperly indulged, an unfit companion for your son."

"Do not, I beg, let that idea disturb your mind, Mr. Herbert," replied her Ladyship, "our children will not be likely to receive any ill impression from what they may see in your son. Charles, our eldest son, is some years older than your's, and is a very well disposed boy and tolerably-well informed for his age, therefore he will rather smile at George Herbert's singularities than be inclined to copy them."

"And should he even want good advice," interrupted Sir Harry, "I do not know any one more likely to give it than Charles Castlemain."

"That is exactly what I should wish," answered Mr. Herbert, "my son will then have the benefit both of precept and example."

During these conversations the younger

branches were collected in a distant part of the room, and all earnest in shewing their attentions to entertain their London visitor. Charles Castlemain attached himself wholly to George, whom he considered more particularly his guest, and whom he hoped to find, though four years younger than himself, an agreeable companion.—Young Herbert, nevertheless, received his attentions with coldness, and complaining of being much fatigued with his journey, expressed a wish to go to bed early. This, to the regret of the young party, was complied with, and Charles immediately said he would shew Master George his room.

The following morning Charles failed not to go to his new friend, with the precaution, however, of entering his room very softly, in case he might not be awake; he found George in a very sound sleep, and judging it to be occasioned by fatigue, retired without disturbing him.

Charles immediately joined his sister,

who was walking in the shrubbery with little Frederick and Louisa, telling them they must not expect to see their London visitor that morning before breakfast, as he had not yet recovered from the effects of his journey.—"But in half an hour," added Charles, "I will go again to his room, or he will not be ready for prayers."

Miss Castlemain said, that she thought he should not have gone so early to Master Herbert's room, as it would be excused if he were not at prayers the first morning.

"You are always right, I know, my dear Sophia," said Charles, "I dare say it will; but I must go again, however, before the bell rings, to see if he is stirring, or he may not be ready for breakfast."

He accordingly went, and on entering the room a second time, finding young Herbert was still asleep, he began calling, "Past eight o'clock."

"Who is that making such a noise?" said George, half asleep; "I did not expect to be called so early."

"Early do you call it?" rejoined Charles, "why I have been up this hour, and have had a walk with my sister, in the shrubbery."

"But I am not accustomed to rise early," replied George. "When I lived with my God-mamma, Lady Rooke, I did not get up till nine o'clock."

"Indeed!" said Charles, "that was very strange!—but you will not be ready for breakfast if you do not get up now."

The idea of not being ready for breakfast effectually roused George, remembering the reprimand he had lately had on that subject from his father. He then begged of Charles to ring the bell, for Thomas to come and dress him.

"Dress you!" exclaimed Charles, "why cannot you dress yourself without assistance?"

"I never tried," answered George, "for my God-mamma always chose that I should have a servant to attend me."

"When I was a little boy," replied

Charles, "I had a servant to dress me, but as soon as I was old enough I was made to dress myself without assistance."

"But your father is rich, and has a title too!"

"It is very true," returned Charles, "but, nevertheless, he will not allow us to give the servants unnecessary trouble."

Thomas now entered the room, and young Herbert, though not without making many complaints of the cold morning, began to dress, with the assistance of the servant. This scene was truly a laughable one to Charles Castlemain, to see a stout boy, of ten years of age, dressed by a servant;—his stockings, shoes, and every article of his dress was put on by Thomas.

The prayer bell now rang, upon which Charles said, he must leave him, to go to prayers, but that he would return to him again as soon as they were over, when he hoped his dressing would be finished.

"To prayers!" exclaimed George, "why,

surely, you do not go to Church in the week?"

"No," replied Charles, "but we always assemble for family prayers, at home, morning and evening; and I will make an apology for you, George, for not being ready, as it is the first morning."

Saying this, he hastened down stairs, and found the family assembled, where Sir Harry Castlemain, in a very devout manner, read the accustomed morning prayers; after which, the servants retired and the family sat down to breakfast.

CHAP. IV.

THE FAMILY BREAKFAST.

A LARGE table was spread and the young people were seated at the lower part, by themselves; and Mr. Herbert having requested that his son might be treated in every respect as one of the family, he was placed, without any ceremony, amongst the young folks. But there was a distinction which George by no means relished, — instead of toast and muffins, or hot rolls, as he had been accustomed to, there was merely plates of thick bread and butter, and dry toast.—

George declined taking either, saying,—"I am not hungry this morning."

"I am sorry to hear it," said Sir Harry, turning towards him, "but depend upon it, my young friend, you will have a better appetite when you have been here a few days, after taking a run in the grounds, with Charles, before breakfast of a morning."

Lady Castlemain desired he would try a piece of toast or muffin.—George readily partook of these, and said, he liked either, but was not accustomed to thick bread and butter.

Lady Castlemain smiled, and said,—"You shall have what you like best this morning."

Mr. Herbert looked at his son with evident displeasure, and, addressing his friends, said,—"You will, I hope, pardon a boy who has been very improperly brought up; all his absurd fancies were complied with by Lady Rooke, who, never having any children of her own, was not

aware of the consequences of such habits, injurious both to his health and happiness."

The expression now visible in the countenance of George, shewed that his feelings were awakened, and his father forbore saying more, than that he hoped nothing of the sort would again happen.

"No, no," exclaimed Sir Harry, "I will venture to say that George Herbert will be every thing his father and friend can wish."

These reproofs, though grating, were not without their effect; George possessed good sense enough to feel that he ought to repair his fault, and, therefore, instead of taking any more of the nice toast and muffin offered, turned to the thick bread and butter, at the lower end of the table, and cheerfully finished his breakfast off it.

When bad habits have been any time established there requires firmness and courage to conquer them, and a public reproof has often proved effectual in producing those feelings, as it now appeared,

for George Herbert took the first opportunity of assuring his father that he would not again willingly give him cause of vexation.—"I will endeavour, Sir," said he, "to become what you would wish me to be."

"If I see that you use your own endeavours, George, I shall be satisfied," said Mr. Herbert. "I know it will require time before you can become what those of your age ought to be; but you have, my son, at the present moment, before your eyes, the example of very amiable characters in the young people of this family, and they are such as I earnestly recommend to your imitation."

CHAP. V.

A WALK TO THE RECTORY.

BREAKFAST being over, and the morning dry and pleasant, Sir Harry Castlemain observed to his Lady, that he thought a walk to the Rectory would prove agreeable to all; and that he was impatient to introduce Mr. Herbert to the worthy rector and his amiable family. The proposal was immediately assented to with pleasure;—indeed, there seldom passed a day without some intercourse between these two families, Lady Castlemain having a particular regard for Mrs. Egerton, the rector's wife.

The party was soon in readiness, Sir Harry and his Lady, with Mr. Herbert and the whole of the young family of the Castlemain's, Miss Sophia having requested her Mamma to let Frederick and Louisa go with them, as the morning was so fine, and that she would take charge of her little sister.

"And as for Frederick," cried Charles, "he shall be of our party till we get to the Rectory, where he will find young companions enough to entertain him."

The distance from the Manor House to the Rectory was not quite two miles, therefore, they were not long in reaching it; but the walk, though short, was not without those instructive observations so useful to young people. The beauty of the winter scene was not disregarded, the trees and hedges were covered with the hoar frost, which hung in icicles, shining like so many gems from the reflection of a bright sun.

"The morning is quite delightful," ex-

claimed Charles Castlemain, "if every day in winter was like this, we should scarcely regret the loss of summer."

"We have no cause for regretting any season, my son," replied Lady Castlemain, "they are all productive of comfort and benefit; and, were it not for the variety they produce, we should not be sensible of the pleasure they all afford."

"And those who have lived any time in a hot climate," rejoined Mr. Herbert, "know truly how to appreciate a temperate cold, such as our own country enjoys."

"Oh! I am sure, Papa, I should prefer a hot climate," cried George, "for I can bear any thing better than cold."

"You may think so, George," answered his father, "but without having made the trial of both you cannot judge. The effect of excessive heat produces langour and inactivity, and thus we see the inhabitants of southern climates deficient in that vi-

gour of mind and body which those of colder regions possess."

"The West Indies, I believe, Sir," added Lady Castlemain, "is particularly trying to the constitutions of Europeans?"

"It is, indeed, Madam," replied Mr. Herbert, "for there the nights are not much less fatiguing than the days, both from heat and the annoyance of the moschetos, to guard against which they enclose their beds with nets. The happy medium of moderate heat and cold enjoyed in this country, added to its other numerous blessings, cannot too firmly attach Britons to their native land."

The Rectory now appeared in view, and they perceived, likewise, some persons before the house.—"There are some of the young family who perceive our approach, and our good rector too will be coming out to meet us," said Sir Harry, addressing Mr. Herbert; "you will, in him, see a truly exemplary character, and his life may be said to be no less useful and edifying than

his preaching. We have not had the happiness of possessing him many years; for, as you, my friend, may recollect, when you was last with us the late rector was far advanced in years."

On their arrival at the house, they were met at the door by Mr. Egerton, who expressed the pleasure this visit gave him.

Sir Harry, taking his hand, said, "I have brought you an old friend of mine, lately arrived from the West Indies, who, as you have heard, we were expecting this Christmas, and I have lost no time, you see, in introducing him to you."

Mrs. Egerton now appeared, followed by the elder branches of the family, and conducted Lady Castlemain to the parlour; and the two elder sons of Mr. Egerton were not backward in expressing the pleasure it gave them to see Master Herbert amongst them, and hoped he liked the country.

George replied, that he liked being with

his papa's friends, but that he preferred London in the winter.

"So our London visitors generally say," answered the elder Egerton, "but, after being here a little while, they like the country very well, and find that it has its amusements as well as town."

"Very true," said Charles Castlemain, "and so George Herbert will think too, before long;—but you have not introduced our visitor to your sisters—they are, as usual, wholly engaged with Sophia."

The young ladies were seated apart, and in earnest conversation upon the progress making in the new Sunday School.—George was then introduced, when, the conversation continuing, he begged to know what a Sunday School was, as he had never heard of any?

"It is," replied the Miss Egertons, "where the children of the village receive religious instruction on Sundays, and where the ladies of the neighbourhood go themselves to teach them."

"Ladies teach poor people's children—I am surprised at that!" rejoined George.

"And why not?" said Miss Sophia. "Does not the Almighty love the poor as well as the rich? We are all equal in his sight, and it is very wrong to think otherwise."

"But my God-mamma," replied George, "did not like to see me talking familiarly with poor people, or even to our own servants."

"The talking familiarly, on useless subjects is quite different," returned Miss Castlemain, "but it is our duty to assist them in all ways, and to teach children, whether rich or poor, to read the Scriptures, as my mamma says, it is the greatest service we can do them."

"And do you teach them any thing besides?" inquired George.

"Yes," replied Sophia, "they are made to learn by heart out of little books that are written by kind friends purposely for them."

"I should like very much to go and hear them some day," returned young Herbert, "do you think I may, Miss Sophia?"

"Oh! certainly, you may come with papa and my brother, who are often there as visitors."

"And pray Sister," interrupted Charles, "when do you and the Miss Egertons intend to give your treat at the School?"

"That was the subject of our conversation," replied Sophia; "but before we can determine any thing we must consult with mamma and Mrs. Egerton."

"A treat!" said George, "pray what sort of treat?"

"That I cannot tell," rejoined Charles; "all I know is, that my sisters and these young ladies mean, as they are constant teachers, to give the poor children a treat, once a year, out of their pocket money:—but as this is the first year of the School being established, we do not yet exactly know what it will consist of. But whatever may be the fare, I am sure there will

be a great many smiling faces assembled, and I shall certainly take a peep at them."

The conversation was here interrupted by the servant handing round some cake and hot elder wine, which the young people thought very agreeable after their walk. After which, Sir Harry Castlemain observed, that he should beg that Mr. Herbert might be indulged with a sight of the dairy, which did so much credit to the ingenuity and taste of Mrs. Egerton and the young ladies.

"Our's," said Mr. Egerton, "is but an humble abode, and, therefore, can be little worthy the attention of a stranger;—but it is not destitute of comfort, and is, I hope, also the abode of content and peace."

"And where," added Sir Harry, "the rich and the poor find an equal welcome."

"It is the duty of all," rejoined Mr. Egerton, "to shew hospitality, according to the means they are blessed with; I must hope, therefore, that I am not deficient in what is enjoined as a duty."

"We will now, then, take a look at the pretty dairy," said Sir Harry, "before we wish you a good morning."

After a view of the lower part of the house, which consisted of the breakfast parlour, Mr. Egerton's study, and a small drawing room, the furniture of which was needle-work, done by Mrs. Egerton and her daughter; the room was also decorated with some very pretty drawings, executed by the former in the early part of her life. At this period she had too many useful concerns to occupy her attention, to allow her time for this favourite amusement.—The drawing room opened into a meadow, on one side of which there was a gravel walk, of some extent, made by Mr. Egerton for his children, and which, being raised some feet above the meadow, formed a terrace, always dry, where they could take exercise in the winter; this led to the dairy, which was, in fact, a grotto. The entrance was an arched way of moss and shell work; but the dairy, though it bore

the same appearance on the outside, the windows being ornamented with shell work, was on the inside composed of white marble. Here the cream was kept, as also the butter when made. The neat and pleasing appearance it all bore was much admired; Mrs. Egerton informed them, this dairy was under the superintendance of her second daughter, who took great pleasure in it, and who she called her assistant in all the concerns of the house.

"Indeed, my dear Mrs. Egerton," said Lady Castlemain, "it would be difficult to say which of your two daughters are most worthy of commendation; the part which Miss Egerton takes, in instructing and attending to the little ones, must be a very great relief to you. There are few mothers, I think, blessed with two more estimable and amiable daughters, or who reflect more credit to those who have trained them."

"I am blessed both in my family and friends," replied Mrs. Egerton, bowing.

The day now advancing, Sir Harry and Lady Castlemain declined entering the house again, and little Frederick and Louisa were accordingly summoned from the nursery, where they had been playing with the younger Egertons.

Lady Castlemain reminded Mrs. Egerton that there was always a side table at the Manor House, on Christmas-Day, for little folks, and that she expected to see them all the day after to-morrow.

The friendly party then separated, and the walk back, though with a declining sun, was rendered very pleasant in conversing on the agreeable visit they had made. Mr. Herbert said, he admired the whole family, but most of all, the head, who appeared to be every thing that could be wished for, as the worthy pastor of his flock.

CHAP. VI.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

THIS day, though only preparatory to the one following, was not without its occurrences;—to the young people there was one that always afforded amusement, and this was, the singers who failed not to arrive on Christmas-eve.—Old customs wear away more slowly in the country, and though we no longer hear the bell-man and his Christmas-Carrol, in the metropolis, yet in its remote villages these vestiges of old times are still to be found. In the early part of the evening the singers arrived, followed by some of

the villagers who were to take a part in the performance. When they were all ranged in order, in the hall, a servant went to inform his master, when Sir Harry and Lady Castlemain, accompanied by their guest and all the young people, immediately hastened to the spot. The Christmas-Carrol was then sung, to hail the approaching day, after which the dancers figured a solemn dance, as they called it, a band, consisting of various wind instruments, playing to them.

This altogether occupied more time than was wished, by Sir Harry and his friends; but as it was an old custom, gratifying to many, they sat patiently to the end, when the singers and dancers made their bow, and, after receiving half-a-guinea, went down to the servants' hall, to take the accustomed refreshment of bread and cheese and a mug of the best ale.

The indifferent singing, and still worse performance of the dancers, amused the

younger part of the family very much, and occasioned a great deal of merriment amongst them the remainder of the evening. Charles and his sister, however, agreed that it would be much better to omit the dancing, it being so badly performed.

"I think as you do, my children," said Lady Castlemain, "for it is making the whole appear in a ridiculous light, which should by no means be, for though a rejoicing it is a solemn one, and should be conducted as such."

"You are perfectly right, my love," replied Sir Harry, "and I think we will consult our friends at the Rectory whether it would not be better in future to forbid the dancers coming. Solemn dances were seen, we know, amongst all nations, in the early ages of the world, and performed sometimes by the priests themselves; but, at the present day, it seems not to agree with our idea of things sacred. There is," continued Sir Harry, turning to Mr. Her-

bert, "a great distinction to be made in the observance of a sacred and a profane festival; and we do not, therefore, permit dancing and merry making among the servants on this day, nor have we any company ourselves, as it would occasion a late hour in going to bed, and they probably would not then be in readiness for Church to-morrow, it being our rule for all the servants to attend Divine worship on Christmas-Day."

Lady Castlemain then looking at her watch, said it was time for Charles and Sophia to retire, as she always wished them, on this night, to be early,—but that Master Herbert might do as his papa thought proper.

"Oh, by all means, let George do the same," said Mr. Herbert; "and it is my particular desire that he will be down stairs, to-morrow, when the bell rings for prayers."

The young people then retired, and the

elder ones, after a short time, did the same; when Mr. Herbert, taking his friend by the hand, said—"How happy do I feel myself to be again in my native country, a country where the Sabbath is hallowed and those observations kept up which teach men to be what, as Christians, they ought to be."

CHAP. VII.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

AT half past nine, instead of nine as on other days, the prayer bell rang, when children and servants, with the heads of the family, assembled in the large breakfast parlour; all were dressed for Church, and the appearance was that of a truly well regulated family. Sir Harry kissed his children, and then proceeded to read the morning prayer, with the additional one for the day, after which they sat down to breakfast, when Sir Harry observed, he was sorry not to see Mr. Wilson at breakfast with them, and that he feared the

friend he went to visit the preceding day was worse.

"It is true," said Lady Castlemain, "our family circle does not seem complete without him; but probably he will be here at dinner."

"Yes," added Sir Harry, "Mr. Wilson is our domestic friend;—he is a worthy man, and so well informed on all subjects that his company is always desirable."

"He appears so," replied Mr. Herbert, "though I only saw him for a few hours on the day of my arrival here."

"I hope," said Charles, "he will read some of his lectures to us this Christmas, for they are very entertaining as well as instructive."

A servant entering, to inform them the carriages were coming round, the whole party immediately arose to prepare for Church. In the first carriage was Sir Harry and his Lady with their daughter, and Mr. Herbert with his son;—in the second carriage were the upper female ser-

vants, with the two younger children,—and, when the day happened to be wet, the caravan was always ordered for the men servants, that none might be uncomfortable.

The Church had been lately repaired and enlarged, as it was found too small for the congregation of two villages, and it was made not only neat and commodious withinside, but bore a handsome outside appearance, Sir Harry having contributed largely on the occasion; it also had a capital organ, an advantage which few country Churches possess. The congregation assembled early, before the service began, and the order and devout appearance observable throughout, could not fail of proving gratifying to every reflecting mind.

Mr. Egerton went through the whole of the service himself, and the spirit of true devotion with which he performed it, could not be unfelt by any. In his sermon he set forth the truths of the Gospel

with energy, but in a language so plain and unadorned, as to be alike understood by all; he shewed the lively interest he took in their eternal welfare, and failed not to remind them that the day they were then assembled to commemorate was not to be observed by feasting and rioting:—"Let your rejoicing," said he, "be that of the spirit rather than the body; and let hospitality be shewn, by those who have the means, more particularly to those who are in need, so will you have praise, not only of man but of God."

When returning home, Mr. Herbert said, "Your worthy pastor, Sir Harry, is equally to be admired in or out of the pulpit,—how forcibly does he speak to the hearts of all!"

"He does, indeed," replied Sir Harry, "and we are not, I hope, quite regardless of his admonitions. At our house you will see no feasting on this day, as I always prefer entertaining my principal tenants soon after it. We have no com-

pany at our own table on Christmas-Day but the rector's family, except we have friends in the house at the time."

"But do not forget, my dear," interrupted Lady Castlemain, "to say that you have a table spread for the poor tenants if not for the rich ones."

"That, indeed, I should be sorry to omit, since Heaven has blessed me with the means;—but this you will see yourself, my friend," continued Sir Harry, "for it is our custom to go into the room, when they are all seated at table, that we may be certain they have every thing in plenty."

The carriage now stopped, and they were agreeably surprised to be handed out by Mr. Wilson, who had just arrived. He said he was much concerned he was not in time for church, as Mr. Egerton's sermons were always a loss, but as his friend still continued very ill he could not leave him so soon as he originally intended.

"We are glad to see you now, Sir," said the Baronet, "and I thank you for re-

membering that I like to see all my family round me on Christmas-Day, at dinner."

At three o'clock the rector and his family arrived at the Manor-House, when all walked together into the hall, where the under tenants were assembled, to the number of about thirty; though there were many absent, as those who had families were plentifully supplied at their own houses, those also who were aged had a good meal sent to them, and thus none were forgotten.—The sick were at all times taken care of.

The dinner consisted of true English fare, that is to say, roast beef and plum-pudding, with very good ale, served up in the best manner, and to judge from the countenances of those who partook of it, they appeared perfectly satisfied with their feast, and truly grateful to the donor for his hospitality.

CHAP. VIII.

BENEVOLENCE.

SIR Harry with his friends and family, sat down to a dinner of nearly similar fare to that they had just viewed; his table was, indeed, at all times a plain one, except when he entertained ceremonious company, which he avoided as much as possible. He and his amiable partner had higher and more lasting gratifications than those of the table, however delicately supplied.

Mr. Herbert knew that his friends at the Manor House were benevolent characters, but he did not know to what extent they

were so, nor would it probably have come to his knowledge but for the conversation which took place between him and the worthy rector of Broomsdale, when dinner was over. After the ladies had withdrawn Mr. Herbert seated himself by Mr. Egerton, and the Baronet being engaged in making inquiries of Mr. Wilson relative to the illness of his friend, the two gentlemen pursued their conversation unnoticed.

"You express your surprise," said Mr. Egerton, "at the appearance of comfort and ease that is seen throughout this village and its vicinity, but were you to visit the interior of every cottage you would be much more gratified, for in no one of them is to be found a want of necessary comfort, and which is wholly to be attributed to the benevolence of the family of your friend, Sir Harry Castlemain;—he is, as you know, Lord of these domains, transmitted to him from a long train of ancestry. He is not only charitable, but he is likewise an encourager of industry and

of every thing that tends to public or private utility, and I may venture to say, that in this village the only poor are the aged and the sick, for whom, however, a very comfortable public asylum is provided, supported by subscriptions. Of the acts of Lady Castlemain I must also speak—her annual donation of cloaths for the women and children, at this season, is truly liberal; also a chaldron of coals at Christmas, with blankets to every labouring man according to his family, so that none can experience want, either of cloathing or fuel, during the winter.—Her benevolence is such, that wherever there is a numerous family of children, she orders them to come to the house for broth or meat two days in the week; she visits every cottage, and knows the wants of all. She has, also, lately established a Sunday School for their children, which, together with that under my direction called the Parish School, afford them every instruction that can be wished. The Sunday

cloathing of the children, throughout the year, is a joint concern amongst the ladies in general. This, and more than I know of, I doubt not, is done by the worthy Baronet and his Lady, and it is with pleasure I communicate these particulars to you, Sir, who might otherwise not be made acquainted with the extent of their bounty."

"I sincerely return you my thanks," replied Mr. Herbert, "for the detail of virtues which are to be found only in the Christian character."

The two gentlemen were here interrupted by the entrance of Master Charles, who came to say coffee was ready, on which Sir Harry and his friends immedidiately proceeded to the drawing room.

CHAP. IX.

QUESTIONS AND COMMAND.

WHEN the tea and coffee were removed Lady Castlemain said, she did not propose cards, as she knew Mr. and Mrs. Egerton never played; but that there was a back-gammon table which might, perhaps, prove agreeable to some of the gentlemen. The young people begged to know if their game of Question and Commands would be any interruption to the company?

"Oh! by no means," was the answer from all; "we shall, on the contrary, be much amused by hearing them."

"And, perhaps," added Sir Harry, "as it is Christmas night, the old folks may be inclined to join the young ones; but if they do not take a part in the game they may listen to the amusements going on."

It was then settled that Charles Castlemain was to be commander in chief for the evening, and he accordingly began to marshal his corps in due order. George Herbert, being the only stranger, was first addressed, and desired to say which he would prefer, two commands and one question—or one command and two questions? This being determined, he was asked, what sign of the zodiac the sun was then in, and what time it rises and sets on the 25th of December, being only four days after the shortest day?

To this question George Herbert was totally unable to reply; he had, it is true, been receiving lessons in geography and the use of the globes, but from the little attention he paid to study he had not received the least benefit, and the visible

confusion in his looks rendered any confession of his ignorance unnecessary.

Lady Castlemain here interfered, observing to her son, that he should not propose questions on subjects not understood by his friends.

Charles replied, he was sorry for the mistake, but that he understood from Master Herbert that he had learned geography from a master;—Henry Egerton, however, would reply for him.

The latter then said, that the sun, on the 25th of December, was in the first degree of the tenth sign, Capricorn, that the sun then rose at eight in the morning, and consequently set at four in the afternoon, as it always set as much after twelve o'clock as it rose before that hour.

"Very well," returned Charles Castlemain. "And now to my second question, which is, that you will tell me by what means you discover the hour in different parts of the world?"

"This is known," answered young Eger-

ton, "by calculating how many degrees the sun rises east or west of us, reckoning fifteen degrees for an hour."

"I did not know, till now," said Sir Harry, "that you were so learned in the science, Henry."

"I know very little, Sir; but it is a very amusing study, I think, and whenever I have opportunity, whilst at home in the holydays, my sisters and I do problems on the globes."

"Very commendable," rejoined the Baronet; "and I am likewise glad to see your memory retains so well what you learn. But pray proceed now in your play, Charles."

"I have now, then," resumed Charles, "to command Master Egerton to inform the company what the science of astronomy may be said to teach; and, likewise, why I have made choice of the subject for this evening particularly?"

A pause of some minutes now ensued, when Henry Egerton observed, that he

feared he should not be able to execute the command given, as his knowledge of the subject was so limited. "The science of astronomy," continued he, "makes us acquainted with all the heavenly bodies.—In the first chapter of Genesis we learn, that God made the sun, the moon, and the stars;—this is known to all who read the Bible. But astronomy is a science that teaches us likewise to calculate the magnitude and the distance of the heavenly bodies, which I am not learned enough to enter upon."

"Oh," cried Charles, "I am quite satisfied with what you have already said; if you knew more, Henry, you would be wiser than your commander. I will now choose some other subject, and beg to ask Miss Egerton her choice, whether Sacred or Profane History?"

The young lady replied, she would prefer Sacred History, as being, perhaps, better acquainted with it than with the other."

"I will then," continued Charles, "ask you for what purpose hunting was first pursued, and from whom the first king descended who is called in scripture, a mighty hunter?"

Miss Egerton replied, "Nimrod, who was the grand-son of Ham; for in the course of these three generations, after the flood, the wild beasts became so numerous that it was necessary to destroy them for the safety of mankind."

"And pray," continued Charles, "now tell me where this king reigned, and what city he is said to have built?"

"The country was called the land of Shinar, where Babel was built."

"Extremely well, Miss Egerton," said Charles; "but I did not expect it was likely to get a forfeit from you,—nor do I think there is much chance of any except when we come to the young ones. I will, however, try if I cannot puzzle Sophia a little."

"That," interrupted his sister, "will not

be very difficult; and pray, Brother, what is the subject you intend to give me?"

"History and Chronology, Sister; so now prepare, and first tell me—what was that kingdom called which the ten tribes formed, and who was their first king?"

"The kingdom was called Israel, under Jeroboam."

"My second question is," continued Charles, "what king was it who put an end to the kingdom of Israel, and what became of this people?"

"The enemy who came against the Israelites," answered Miss Castlemain, "was Salmanzar, King of Assyria, who sent the people into captivity; but these ten tribes, though dispersed and in captivity, are said to have been, nevertheless, preserved a distinct people in different countries."

"Oh, I see it is impossible for me to puzzle you, Sister!" exclaimed Charles, "particularly in Sacred History, now you teach the children at the Sunday School,

had I recollected this, I would have made choice of another subject for you."

"Well, Brother," said Miss Sophia, smiling, "what is the command you have now for me?—Perhaps I shall not be so successful at the last."

"My command is," said Charles, "that you tell me the year of the world when these two events happened."

Miss Sophia, after considering a few minutes, said she could not remember the exact date of either of these events.

"A forfeit! a forfeit!" exclaimed Charles.

The company here interposed, observing she ought to be excused.

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Egerton, "for Miss Castlemain has certainly answered to the most essential part of the questions proposed, having remembered the events of the history, which is of more consequence than the dates. And now, my young friend," added the rector, "tell me your own ideas, when you asked the ques-

tion,—why you made choice of Astronomy as the subject for this evening, being Christmas-Night?"

"My idea, Sir," answered Charles, "was, that as Astronomy teaches us to consider the works of God, it was a proper subject for this day, when we celebrate a greater event than the creating the sun, the moon, and the stars."

"I am much pleased to find these were your thoughts, my dear Charles," said Mr. Egerton; "and will only add to them, that the sun which gives light, and heat, and life to this world, is considered an emblem of *the Son of Righteousness that was to arise with healing in his wings*, of that Saviour who came to redeem a sinful world."

Charles expressed his thanks for the addition Mr. Egerton was so good as to make, which, he said, he should always remember.

After this little digression, the young

people resumed their amusements till ten o'clock. The younger Egertons, with little Frederick and Louisa Castlemain took their part, and were not a little delighted at being that evening admitted amongst the elder ones.

The supper being announced, the young people, with the company, repaired to the eating-parlour, where they found a great many nice things, such as tarts, jellies, ham, and chickens; and, in compliance with ancient custom on this day, a dish of plum-porridge on the middle of the table.

It was too a very merry supper amongst the little ones, who each enumerated the *puzzling questions* they had answered.

When the two families separated, Mr. and Mrs. Egerton said, they hoped there was no occasion to put their friends in mind of the *annual custom* of dining together at the Rectory that day week.

"Certainly not," said Sir Harry; "we

should be sorry that any thing prevented us a pleasure we have enjoyed for some years; and how can we experience more comfort than finishing the old year and commencing the new one in the society of friends we truly love and venerate!"

"But we shall," added Lady Castlemain, "meet often before that day. The Sunday-School dinner, at which Sophia and your daughters preside, my dear Mrs. Egerton, will bring us together on Friday, nor is there a day passes, I believe, during the vacation, that our sons do not meet."

After the worthy Rector and his amiable family had departed, Sir Harry Castlemain, taking George Herbert by the hand, drew him aside, saying, "now tell me, my young friend, how you like the country, and if you begin to feel yourself at home at Broomsdale?"

"Yes, Sir," replied George, "I like it very much; and I should be ungrateful indeed if I did not, so kind as you are to me."

"I am glad to hear," rejoined the Baronet, "that you are likely to be happy amongst us; and pray how do you like our neighbours, the Egerton family?"

"Very much indeed; Henry and his brother are so clever, and know so much, and the Miss Egertons are so like Miss Sophia, that they might be taken for sisters. It is not surprising that Charles is so fond of them all. If I could but become like them I should make my papa quite happy."

"If you have really the wish, my dear George, you need not fear but you will be so; and, considering the disadvantages you have laboured under, the wish you express for improvement, is a proof that a little time will make you as clever as Henry and his brother are; and what should you say, George, to going to the same school with the two Egertons?"

"I should like it very much."

"Well then," added Sir Harry, "I will

certainly talk with your papa on the subject. I know he is making inquiry for a school to place you at, and he cannot do better than consult our good Rector on this point; and now, my young friend, good night."

The Baronet then rejoined the family party, and George retired to his bed room.

CHAP. X.

THE GOTHIC HALL, &c.

THE ancient mansion of the Castlemains was a gothic structure, in a state of great decay when Sir Harry came to the title, and soon after taking possession of the estate he found it necessary to build a new dwelling; when, preferring comfort to grandeur, he erected an edifice where light and the free circulation of air were enjoyed without obstruction. The stately castle had disappeared, and in its stead the present plain but handsome Manor House appeared.

In making this change Sir Harry Castlemain had, however, preserved a vestige of the ancient abode of his forefathers—a small wing of the old castle, consisting of one lofty and spacious room, on the ground floor, now called "The Gothic Hall." He had it repaired with all its ancient embellishments; and, standing detached from the dwelling, bore the appearance of a small old church, from its spiral summit and surrounding turrets.—This seen at a distance might, however, be taken for part of the house, and it was to this building Mr. Herbert alluded, on approaching Broomsdale, when he exclaimed, "Do I not see the turrets of Broomsdale Hall?" The furniture of this hall was carefully preserved, and corresponded admirably with the building;—the long tables of polished oak, and chairs of the same, on which were painted the family arms, all tended to recal to the imagination the things that are past; and if those knights of valour were no longer

seen here seated at the head of their obedient vassals, their resemblances, at least, adorned the walls of the gothic hall, for between each of its narrow long arched windows, was hung a picture of Sir Harry's ancestors, clad in armour. At the present period, the hall was sometimes used as an eating room, at others as a ball room; and for the latter purpose every birth day that occurred in the family.

On this day it was used as a dining room, and here Sir Harry always received his tenants when he gave them their annual dinner, at Christmas. The day was now arrived, and the tenants' dinner did not fail of being a subject for conversation at breakfast. Sir Harry, addressing his friend, Mr. Herbert, said,—"It is right to shew hospitality, and our tenants have certainly a claim to it, nevertheless I am not sorry when the day is over. I shall, however, have a friend to day on my right hand, and Mr. Wilson, who will be at his usual seat at the bottom of the table. I

find a great assistance to me on these occasions."

"I hope," returned Mr. Herbert, "as it is a gentleman party, you do not sit to a very late hour?"

"No, no," answered Sir Harry, "my tenants know that would not be agreeable to me; I love to make them welcome, but I do not encourage excess. I should inform you likewise, my friend, that it is a dinner quite in the old English style, and that on this day we make use of the Gothic hall, where, in former times, many a baron of beef has been seen, and the dishes heaped one on another, it must be allowed, bespoke plenty, if not elegance."

"It would seem," said Mr. Wilson, "as if the quantity rather than the quality of food was then considered. That men, in former times ate more than at the present is not surprising, as they were almost all of them warriors, nor had they so much variety in vegetables at their tables as we have now; but one cannot so well ac-

count for ladies taking beef steaks and ale for their breakfast."

"This appears so strange at the present day," replied Lady Castlemain, "that one might doubt the truth of these accounts had we not the authority of history; but if we have more refinement now than heretofore, I fear we have gained nothing by it, for we are neither better wives nor better mothers than the homely dames of former times."

"Your observation is just," replied Sir Harry, "but I must, nevertheless, be the advocate of modern manners, particularly in the female sex, to whom refinement and delicacy must always belong, unless they depart from their true character. And now, my love, may I ask what your plan is, for this day of separation?"

"Do you then forget," replied Lady Castlemain, "the good widow, in the village, with whom Sophia and myself always dine on this day?"

"True," returned the Baronet, "and to

carry consolation and comfort in your village rounds."

"Lady Castlemain will have the advantage of us to-day," said Mr. Herbert, "for her's will be intellectual enjoyment."

The breakfast over, the family party separated and pursued their different plans. Sir Harry and Mr. Herbert ordered their horses and took a morning ride, accompanied by Mr. Wilson, as Charles did not attend his studies in Christmas week.—Lady Castlemain with her daughters, prepared for taking their walk to the village, attended by a servant who carried wine and jelly to the sick woman they were going to visit. Lady Castlemain told her son, that as he and Master Herbert were going to the Rectory, they might walk with her and Sophia as far as the village; that they should likewise return with them in the evening, and that she had ordered the carriage to be at Mrs. Jones's at eight o'clock.

In the evening, soon after Lady Castle-

main and the young people returned home, they were joined in the drawing room by the Baronet and Mr. Herbert. The conversation, as might be supposed, turned on the dinner party. Mr. Herbert said he had found the tenants' dinner a very pleasant one, as he was fortunately seated near a very intelligent man.

"There are," replied Sir Harry, "some very well informed clever men amongst them, I assure you, from whom I always gain information; for I am myself but an indifferent farmer, and I am always ready to join them in any improvement they recommend, in the view of contributing to the good of all."

"The great improvement made in agriculture and farming, in this country, within the last twenty years," remarked Mr. Herbert, "is a proof of the attention and encouragement gentlemen of landed property give to this important subject, in doing which they not only consult their own interest, but are promoting that of the country at large."

"And you, Charles," said the Baronet to his son, "have, I suppose, passed the day with your friend George, at the Rectory?"

"Yes," replied Charles, "we dined there, but we first walked with mamma and Sophia about the village, and to the Sunday School, where we heard all the arrangements for the treat the young ladies give to-morrow."

"Do pray," said his father, "let us hear how it is all settled?"

"First then," continued Charles, "it is settled that the children are to have a dinner, instead of cake and currant wine, as it is mamma's opinion it will be the best for them. They are to have boiled legs of mutton and baked plum pudding for dinner,—I think I should have no objection to a bit along with them:—But to proceed.—The children are all to assemble in the school-room, at twelve o'clock, and to be seated in due order, according to their age, as they are in school, and at one o'clock they are to dine. My mamma and

sister, and all the ladies of the Egerton family are to be there, to direct and see that every thing is right. Perhaps you too, Papa, and Mr. Herbert, will take a walk and look at them?—George and myself will certainly be amongst the visitors."

Lady Castlemain observed, that as it was the first year of the school being established, she thought it would be best not to have visitors.—"By the next year," added she, "they will be better prepared to receive them, and the children by that time will be more in training.—Besides, your papa and Mr. Herbert will have an opportunity, next week, of seeing a school of this kind, on a larger plan, and which is conducted in a very superior manner."

"Oh! I can guess then," exclaimed Charles, "that you intend going to the anniversary of Miss Mordaunt's School of Industry, which we have heard so much talk of.—Do, pray Mamma, let us all be of the party?"

CHAP. XI.

The Treat at the Sunday School.

THE 27th of December will not fail, henceforward, of being noted throughout the village of Broomsdale.—Every female child who had attained its seventh year, belonged to the Sunday School, and consequently of the number of those who partook of the treat given by the ladies, their teachers; was an event to them of such importance that they had thought and talked of nothing else for days before. The mothers were occupied with it no less than their children, hoping their girls would behave well at dinner,

and cautioning them to remember that Lady Castlemain and Mrs. Egerton would be looking at them. They were to appear in their best frocks, those which they wore on Sundays to go to Church, and that they might be sure to be ready in time, some of the children were dressed by nine o'clock in the morning, and long before twelve all were assembled at the school. The numbers amounted to about fifty, and they were all seated, as ordered, before the ladies arrived, the youngest of them filling the lowest form.

Two long tables were prepared, and laid ready for the dinner, by servants sent in the morning from the Manor House.

Before the dinner was served, Miss Sophia ordered the children to stand up, and, as head teacher, addressed them, and said,—a dinner would be given them every year, the same as that then before them, as an encouragement for them to be good children, and very attentive to what was taught them; but if any of them were

found to be idle, or forgetting what they learnt, or ill-behaved at church, they would not be allowed to come to the dinner next year, nor share in any rewards that might be given.

After this little exhortation, she called the elder girls to her, and told them how they were to be seated at dinner, that they were to be divided equally at the two tables, in order to assist the younger ones.

The dinner was now served, and the servants were ordered, by Lady Castlemain, to carve for the children. Mrs. Egerton said, she thought there could be no impropriety in the children having half a glass of currant wine each, after their plum pudding, and that she had ordered four bottles to be brought for them.

"Certainly not," replied Lady Castlemain, "and home-made wine, so good as your's, must be a treat to any one."

When the children were seated at dinner, the ladies took their places on the forms at the end of the room, and from

the pleasure the sight afforded of so many little ones made happy, they enjoyed the repast no less than those who partook of it. The young ladies, who were the donors of the feast, had provided so plentifully, that there remained a large portion of every thing, when it was proposed that the plum pudding should be divided amongst the children for them to take home, and that, as it was not very much unlike plum cake, they would have a treat, Miss Egerton said, for the evening. This was agreed to without one dissenting voice. The children had each of them a glass of the currant wine given them, and, standing up, drank the health of all their patronesses; after which they were dismissed, very much delighted with their dinner, and the addition of the piece of plum pudding they took home with them.

"Our infant school," said Lady Castlemain to Mrs. Egerton, after the children were gone, "will, I hope, prove a useful one to the village, and likewise a relief to

the labours of the public one, under the direction of our good friends."

"It certainly will," replied Mrs. Egerton, "and I am inclined to think, that the Sunday instruction being given by different teachers has more effect on the children."

"I hope," added Lady Castlemain, "our daughters will shew themselves worthy of the choice we have made, in appointing them the instructors of religious knowledge to these poor children, many of whom have not parents at home able to teach them their duty."

"Be assured, Mamma," replied Miss Castlemain, "we shall not be found deficient in our endeavours, and though we have not great abilities, our wish of being useful will, I hope, enable us to become so."

"I doubt it not, Sophia," rejoined her mother, "nor will you be without the aid of those more experienced. Mrs. Egerton and myself, you know, often take a part with the young teachers, and, whenever we

find the children inattentive to your instruction, or not duly observing the rules of the school, we shall not fail to interfere."

These assurances gave confidence to the young ladies, particularly to Miss Sophia, who was called the head teacher of the Village Sunday School.

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of the young gentlemen, who, with their friends, the Egertons, had walked to meet their mother and sisters and to accompany them home, at the same time expressing their disappointment at not being admitted to see the children dine.

"Indeed," said Charles to his sister, as they were walking together, "I am positively quite angry with you, Sophia; you might, surely, have invited your own family, if not strangers, on the occasion."

"It is with mamma then, Charles, you must be angry," replied Miss Castlemain,

"for we have acted entirely under her direction."

"I am sorry, Charles, you and your friends are disappointed," said Lady Castlemain; "but we shall not neglect you thus the next time; and the amusement we have in store for you this Christmas, will, I hope, prove a greater pleasure than that which has now been withheld."

"Pray, Mamma," rejoined Charles, "what amusements do you mean?"

"Several," replied her Ladyship, "for I believe we shall not find one day without, between this and Twelfth-Day, which, as usual, you know, concludes our Christmas amusements. If any of you wish to know how they are arranged, when I get home I will inform you."

"We shall all like to hear, very much!" exclaimed Charles, "and, I hope, as you are so good to us, we shall have a dance before our grand ball, on Twelfth-Day."

"That, indeed, I have not thought about," returned his mother; "the amuse-

ments I particularly alluded to are Mr. Wilson's Lectures, and our intended visit to Miss Mordaunt, on the Anniversary day of her School; but, as these are morning entertainments, they will not prevent you and your young friends having a dance in the evening of one of those days."

"Thank you, thank you, Lady Castlemain!" was the cry of all the young people together.

They were now arrived at that part of the road which led to the Rectory, when Mrs. Egerton and her daughters took leave of their friend, Lady Castlemain, the latter reminding them of the hour of twelve to-morrow.

No sooner were the family of the Castlemains arrived at home than Charles reminded his mother of her promise to give the desired information how their amusements were arranged. Lady Castlemain, then taking out her pocket-book, read as follows:—

"Saturday, 28th, Mr. Wilson's first Lecture.

"Sunday, 29th,—As usual.

"Monday, 30th,—Dinner company, at home.

"Tuesday, 31st.—Mr. Wilson's second Lecture; and, at the desire of my son Charles," she added, "a dance in the evening."

Upon hearing this Charles caught hold of his mother's hand and kissed it in great rapture; nor were the rest deficient in expressing their thanks for being thus gratified. Lady Castlemain then proceeded:—

"Wednesday, 1st of January.—To dine at the Rectory.

"Thursday, 2nd.—The visit to Miss Mordaunt's School of Industry.

"Friday, 3rd. — Mr. Wilson's third Lecture.

"Saturday, 4th.—Louisa's birth-day.

"Sunday, 5th.—As before.

"Monday, 6th. — Twelfth-day. And thus, my children, you see our amuse-

ments, this Christmas, are more numerous than usual; and they are likewise varied, since we have both morning and evening entertainments."

"I am quite pleased, Madam, to hear Mr. Wilson begins his Lectures to-morrow; I received a great deal of information from those he delivered in the summer, on Astronomy. I suppose these will be on some other subject?"

"Oh, yes," interrupted Charles, "and I believe I can tell you, Sister, what the subject will be, though I have not been informed; but, as I have lately seen a great many drawings of plants and flowers laying in Mr. Wilson's study, I guess the present Lectures will be on Botany."

"You are perfectly right, my son," replied Lady Castlemain, "and they will, I hope, be listened to, by all of you, with great attention; and that, after you have heard what Mr. Wilson will say on the subject, you will feel an inclination to dedicate your leisure hours sometimes to

this most pleasing and rational amusement, a study so peculiarly suited to those who live in the country and have the beauties of nature at all times before them. It is in compliance with your father's wish and mine, that Mr. Wilson has now made choice of this subject for his Lectures, and we were agreeably surprised, yesterday, when he informed us he should be ready to deliver his first Lecture any day we chose to fix, and I am much pleased to think the whole of them will be given before Mr. Herbert and his son leave us."

"I recollect having a Prospectus given us, by Mr. Wilson, before the last Lectures, which informed us of the heads of the intended subjects of his discourse," said Charles; "I am surprised we have not some on the present occasion."

"That will not be forgotten, I have no doubt," replied Lady Castlemain. "But Mr. Wilson must, I am sure, have been very much occupied, in making his ar-

rangements, as it was only a few days ago your father first mentioned the subject to him. But it is now time," added her Ladyship, looking at her watch, "for Sophia and myself to dress for dinner; and you, Charles, and your friend, Master Herbert, will do the same."

In the evening, Mr. Wilson presented a Prospectus of his intended Lecture to each of the company, observing, at the same time, that he had endeavoured to treat the subject rather as an amusement for his young hearers than as a study, therefore, had entered as little as possible into the scientific part of Botany; and that these Lectures were to be considered merely as introductory ones, for the uninformed.

CHAP. XII.

MR. WILSON's LECTURE.

THE company not being numerous, little preparation was necessary for their accommodation at the lecture.—A long table, at the upper end of which was placed a desk with a chair a little raised from the floor for Mr. Wilson, and two rows of chairs round it, were found fully sufficient. The hour of twelve, named by Mr. Wilson, was punctually observed, Sir Harry and his Lady with Mr. Herbert and their friends from the Rectory being all assembled by that time. Drawings of different plants were laid on the table,

with specimens of flowers and leaves dried after the manner prescribed, and which were from time to time, during the lecture, handed round to the company.—As soon as the party were seated Mr. Wilson began as follows:—

Lecture I.

ON BOTANY.

"PLANTS, according to the science of botany, are divided into classes, orders, genera, species, and varieties; and these arrangements are to be considered as so many necessary steps by which the young student must arrive at the desired knowledge. The names and terms peculiar to this science must likewise be studied, for, as Linnæus himself observes, the Nomenclature of botany is to be compared to the invention of letters, by which we

are enabled to compose words and sentences and make known our ideas.

"Botany may likewise be considered under two distinct heads—the useful and the amusing. Plants are used in medicine, in many of the mechanical arts, and it is to the learned in this science we are indebted for the variety of beautiful shrubs and flowers that embellish our gardens, no less than the productions of other countries in the fruits and vegetables seen on our tables. But the class of hearers to whom these lectures are addressed, will not enter into any profound study of the science, by them botany will only be considered as a rational amusement when their more necessary studies allow of the relaxation. It will, nevertheless, be requisite, for the acquiring even this superficial degree of knowledge, to proceed in a regular manner, and ascend, in due order, the first steps of the science.

"The learned and celebrated Linnæus is justly called the founder of the science,

and to his indefatigable labours are owing the sexual system, and the scientific arrangements known in botany, and which it will be necessary to bring forward on the present occasion. The twenty-four classes of the sexual system of Linnæus are as follows:—

"CLASS.

" 1. Monandria, one stamen.

" 2. Diandria, two stamens.

" 3. Triandria, three stamens.

" 4. Tetrandria, four stamens of equal length.

" 5. Pentandria, five stamens, anthers, not united.

" 6. Hexandria, six stamens, all of equal length.

" 7. Heptandria, seven stamens.

" 8. Octandria, eight stamens.

" 9. Enneandria, nine stamens.

" 10. Decandria, ten stamens, filaments separate.

" 11. Dodecandria, twelve stamens to nineteen, inserted on the receptacle.

" CLASS.

" 12. Icosandria, twenty or more stamens, inserted upon the calyx or corolla.

" 13. Polyandria, many stamens, inserted into the receptacle.

" 14. Didynamia, four stamens, two long, two short, flowers ringent.

" 15. Tetradynamia, six stamens, four long, two short flowers cruciform.

" 16. Monadelphia, filaments united at bottom but separate at top.

" 17. Diadelphia, filaments united in two sets.

" 18. Polyadelphia, filaments united into three or more sets.

" 19. Syngenesia, anthers united, five stamens.

" 20. Gynandria, stamens inserted on the pistil.

" 21. Monœcia, stamens and pistils on separate corollas upon the same plant.

" CLASS.

" 22. Dioecia, stamens and pistils in distinct corollas upon different plants.

" 23. Polygamia, various situations, stamens only, or pistils only, along with viscual flowers.

" 24. Cryptogamia, stamens and pistils inconspicuous.

" The observations on the classes are:—Class 3, Triandria, contains chiefly the natural tribe of Grasses.

" Class 5, Pentandria, has the Lurid plants, a poisonous tribe, also the Umbelliferæ.

" Class 7, Hexandria, the Lilies.

" Class 12, Icosandria, contains the edible fruit.

" Class 13, Polyandria, has many poisonous plants.

" Class 14. Didynamia, has the natural tribe of ringent flowers.

" Class 15, Tetradynamia, contains the natural tribe of cruciform flowers, which are Antiscorbutic.

"Class 16, Monadelphia, is composed chiefly of the Mallow tribe.

"Class 17, Diadelphia, consists of the Papelionaceous tribe, which produces mostly edible seeds.

"Class 18, Syngensia, possesses the compound flowers. The other classes are not composed of natural tribes, except

"Class 24, Cryptogamia, which has the natural tribes of Ferns, Mosses, Sea Weeds, and Mushrooms.

"After the 24 Classes, follow the Orders, 121 in number, next the Genera, amounting to 2000, and the different Species, or Families, as they are sometimes called, nearly 30,000. For any knowledge of these, I must refer my young hearers to some of the regular treatises on Botany. There are now several short works, on the science, adapted for young people, and in these they will find all the information required. We can here only make general observations on these and other parts of the science, the intention of

these Lectures being, to give a taste for Botany as an amusement, as before observed, and not for youth to study it as a science; this must be left for a more advanced period of life, when their leisure will allow of the pursuit.

"I have to add, that the study of Botany is like all others which have the Works of Nature for their object, it leads us to a more intimate knowledge of the wisdom and goodness of the Great Creator. May this idea be ever impressed on the minds of the young students, then will they experience a delight beyond that of the eye; they will find all equally worthy their admiration and praise, whether the lowly herb or towering tree,—the minute insect we trample under foot, or the stupendous heavenly bodies rolling over our heads.

"To proceed:—The number of plants being so great, and their kinds so various, without the aid of method they could be but very imperfectly known; but the most

uninformed, if he proceeds according to the rules laid down, may, in a short time, be able to examine a plant scientifically.—First he will ascertain, in a precise manner, to what Class it belongs, next the Order, and thirdly the Genus. The most common observer has noticed the different kinds or sorts of Roses, from the Dog-Rose, in the field, to the Moss-Rose of the garden; yet, notwithstanding their variety, they are all of the same Genus. The same is observable in Geraniums and other plants.

"Every science has certain terms and rules of art by which the knowledge of it is attained, thus it is with Botany; by observing them we arrive at the wished for information, without them we cannot do any thing.

"I shall now endeavour to give a clear though brief account of the distinguishing features of the Vegetable world. First in order stands the Tree,—secondly, the Shrub and under Shrub,—thirdly, the Herb and Flower.

"The Tree is a ligneous plant, in stem and branches, rising high, and generally of long life. The Shrub is a tree of a smaller growth, with young branches producing buds. And Herbs are of a soft tender substance and delicate fibres which die down in the winter, whether their roots be annual or not. The root of the tree is terminated with small fibres which spread yearly, and have the faculty of sucking up nutritive juices. The stems of plants take an opposite direction to their roots, multiply the plant, and are covered with leaves and flowers. Stems are likewise of different sorts, as hollow or solid, with knots or otherwise. The formation of a solid stem of a tree is too curious to be passed over unnoticed, it is composed of an epiderm or skin, the bark or cortical circle, the sap or imperfectly formed wood produced by the bark, the wood in concentric circles, and the medulla or pith in the centre, each distinct part having its own peculiar vessels.

"The growth of trees depends on their roots which pump up the nutritive juices; the pores are more open in the root, as may be seen in the Oak,—in a good soil the roots of this tree, though of slow growth, have been found nearly four feet in length, while the stem has not exceeded six inches above ground.

Leaves of Plants.

"The Leaves of Plants inhale moisture and exhale air, they furnish a refreshing and pleasing shade, and are beautifully diversified in their appearance. Each leaf is composed of a large nerve which goes off in branches, and these again divide into smaller fibres to an excessive minuteness, which, when preserved by maceration in water, form those beautiful skeletons we so much admire.

"The disposition of the leaves within the buds, as well as the opening, is called by botanists the foliation, and their various kinds, with the appearance they put on in different plants, have all their appropriate terms, as given in the regular works on this science, but they are too numerous to be brought forward here.

"The decay of the leaf and its fall has been the subject of much botanical investigation. Some plants are ever-greens, and it is observable that resinous plants more particularly retain their foliage.—Leaves are said to be caducous when falling before the end of summer, deciduous when falling in autumn, persisting when remaining longer than autumn, and evergreen when remaining through several seasons and appearing green in the winter months.

"How admirably are leaves confined and protected against the cold in their infant state!—In hot climates trees have no buds, in cold ones they have them, and

like young birds they are often protected by a kind of woolliness. We find, likewise, that each particular plant has its own mode of unfolding its infant leaves; well may we exclaim, 'How manifold are thy works, O, Lord, in wisdom hast thou made them all!'

"I shall now make a few observations on the Sleep of Plants, with which this first Lecture will conclude.—The Sleep of Leaves is the different appearance they put on, chiefly at night from that shewed in the day; nor can any thing be more curious and singular than this folding of leaves, as seen at stated hours, and which, in some instances, so changes the physiognomy of the plant that it is scarcely to be known for the same. This contraction of the leaf is found in plants in the stove, the same as with those kept in the open air, which shews it is not caused by change of heat; neither does it depend on light, as some plants fold up their leaves in the day, it is, therefore, reasonable to suppose

that it arises from the irritability of the plant. The sensitive plant and the tribe to which it belongs are all found to exhibit this curious phenomenon of the vegetable world."

After the Lecture, Mr. Wilson, addressing his young hearers, said he hoped they would bear in mind, to the next Lecture, on Tuesday, what had now been said, and that, in the mean time, if any of them wished for an explanation of the Botanical terms they had heard, or on any other point, he would with pleasure give them the desired information.

They all expressed their thanks, and added they wished the next Lecture was sooner than Tuesday.

The young ladies of both families were highly delighted with what they had heard, and Miss Sophia observed to her young friends that she never before thought Botany could afford so much amusement, but she would now purchase all the books Mr. Wilson thought necessary for the study,

that she and the Miss Egertons might botanize together the ensuing summer.

The parents expressed their approbation of this resolution, and Charles Castlemain said, that at the summer vacation, he with Frederic and James Egerton, who loved to take long walks, would botanize and go and look for plants for their sisters.

"And perhaps George Herbert may be of your party," added Sir Harry. "It is not an improbable thing, my friend, is it?"

"By no means," replied Mr. Herbert, "and I must confess I think he could be no where so much to my satisfaction or his own improvement, as in the company of those he is now with.—What do you think, George?"

"I think so too, Sir," returned young Herbert; "and I should be very ungrateful for the kindness shewn me, if I did not say I am very happy with such friends."

CHAP. XIII.

SUNDAY.

THIS day admitting of no amusements, it will be sufficient to say, it passed in the due observance of the duties enjoined to all—the attendance on public worship, and in works of charity to the poor. The family at the Manor-House were distinguished for the fulfilling both these duties in a very exemplary manner. The instructing of the village children, at the Sunday School, was one of their good works, and followed after leaving Church, taking up the intermediate time to dinner; and every Sunday evening Sir

Harry Castlemain had his whole family, children and servants, assembled, when the Church Prayers were read, and the Sermon after, by himself or his Lady. This took up an hour, from eight to nine, and at this Sunday Evening Service every servant in the house was expected to be present.

The practice of Family Worship, is now so much laid aside, that except amongst the clergy it is scarcely ever seen even in the country; it must nevertheless be ranked as a Christian duty, and producing the best effect on the minds of the young and the uninformed, when accompanied with the example of a Christian Life.

CHAP. XIV.

MONDAY.

DINNER COMPANY AT THE CASTLE.

"MAMMA," said Charles Castlemain to his mother, at breakfast, "I do not consider this day as one of the most amusing during the Christmas."

"And why not, my son?" inquired her Ladyship.

"Oh, there is so much form attending this kind of company, it is so different from a dinner with friends."

"It is very true, Charles," rejoined his father, "the company of particular friends

afford more gratification to our feelings; nevertheless, an intercourse with others must be kept up, unless we would live wholly secluded from the world, and we should then be deficient in our duty to society, a duty which is not meant to be confined to our own immediate circle."

"There is likewise another motive for seeing what is stiled ceremonious company," said Lady Castlemain, "which ought to influence parents particularly; that is, it forms the manners of young people who are entering life, and teaches them what must be observed when living in the world."

"I think too, my young friend, Charles," added Mr. Herbert, "that one of your lively disposition will not be averse to the modes of life as practised in the world, when once you are familiarized with the bustle of it."

"True, my friend," observed the Baronet, "the bustle of the world has certainly charms for the young; I found it so my-

self. I likewise think it is useful to know, when young, a little of the vanities and follies of the world; nor will they take any lasting hold of those who have had the happiness and advantage of good examples and a right education."

"Yes," exclaimed Charles, "I think it must be entertaining, to meet with such variety of people as you see when living in town—some are so odd! Pray, do Mrs. Greville and her daughters come to-day, Mamma? They always amuse me!"

"I believe we shall see them," replied his mother. "But why do they amuse you, Charles?"

"Oh, they are so much dressed out always, and then they talk so much about fashion, and the great people they visit in London."

"I cannot say I admire these young ladies, any more than Charles," said his sister, "and I always feel at a loss what to say to them, I know so little about the fashionable world in London."

"That may be supposed," replied Lady Castlemain, "and knowing that you have been brought up wholly in the country, they would probably expect that you should rather listen to them; but I am sorry to see that either of you encourage a dislike to these persons, merely because their habits and manners differ from your own,—you both, as yet, know too little of the world to draw hasty conclusions, or give your decided opinions upon any one."

"And how many are we to expect to-day?" said Sir Harry. "If they all come who are invited, we shall not be fewer than twenty."

"I have not received any excuses," replied Lady Castlemain, "and I hope I shall see all my neighbours. We seldom have these large parties more than twice in the year, and I should not fancy it to be Christmas if I did not see every one within ten miles round with whom we are acquainted."

"Perfectly right, my love," cried the

Baronet, "the old English hospitality of our forefathers is still remembered amongst us, and will, I hope, continue to be so by our sons."

The description of a dinner, however liberally provided (for no expense was spared on the occasion), would afford so little gratification that we shall pass it over, observing, however, that every delicacy of the season, in fish and game, of which there is no deficiency in the neighbourhood of Bath, was seen on this day at the Manor-House; nor would it be productive of much entertainment to describe the manner in which the guests were received by Sir Harry Castlemain and his amiable Lady. The modes and habits of genteel life are now so very similar in all places, that at the present day a country lady often possesses the same ease and refinement as one who has been all her life the ornament of a court, and of this number certainly was Lady Castlemain, whose sweetness of manner and natural

politeness, added to her cultivated and benevolent mind, delighted all who conversed with her.

The order and taste with which a dinner was served was always noticed at this house, and from the regularity and quietness with which every thing was done, it might have been supposed that the company consisted of half a dozen persons instead of twenty-four.

Cards after dinner, as is usual in large companies, were resorted to to fill up the evening, at which they continued till a late hour, when a clear moon-light night enabled the distant visitors to reach their homes in safety.

All expressed the pleasure the day had afforded them, and the young people, remembering the reproof they had received in the morning, likewise observed, they had been very much pleased with all the company.

"And yet," said Charles, "I could not help thinking all the evening of to-morrow,

when we shall be taking our partners by the hand and calling for a favourite dance. You remember, Mamma, what you said,—'That as the Egerton family would be here, at Mr. Wilson's Lecture, they must dine with us to be ready for the evening."

"Certainly," replied his mother, "I never forget my promises."

CHAP. XV.

TUESDAY.

THE following morning Lady Castlemain, addressing her son said, "I fear your evening's entertainment will be a little spoiled by the indifferent music you will have, as we have only been able to procure the old fiddler in the village, unless we send to Bath for a regular band, which, you know Charles, we never do but on particular occasions."

"Do not fear, Mamma," replied Charles, "our amusement will not be spoiled; I dare say we shall dance as well, and laugh as much as if the finest band was playing to us. But I hear the sound of a carriage, it is the Egerton's I dare say, and I re-

member I promised to join Mr. Wilson, and assist him in arranging his papers for the Lecture.—I hope I shall not be too late."

At Twelve o'clock Mr. Wilson met the company assembled, and began his second Lecture.

Lecture II.

ON BOTANY.

"How beautiful is the variety in nature, and how admirably is every plant adapted for its station!—The earth is first spread over with lowly herbs, a little above rise the shrubs, and then the stately trees, towering high in air; and with this beautiful arrangement is intermixed the variety of flowers in all their vivid hues.

"Flowers are, to the eye, the most attractive part of plants, and at the same time that they embellish the face of nature they re-produce their kind.

"To flowers belong seven constituent parts, which are:—

"First. The Pistil, in the centre of the flower.

"Second. The Stamen, exterior to the pistil. In the perfect stamen is found two parts, the Anther, containing the fertilizing dust, and the Filament, elevating the Anther. The perfect Pistil is composed of three parts—the Stigma, the Style, and the Germen.

"Third. The Corolla interior, which is the delicate inner leaves of the flower.

"Fourth. The Calyx exterior.

"Fifth. The Nectary, for secreting and containing the honey.

"Sixth. The Pericarp, filled with the mature seed.

"Seventh. The Receptacle, or basis upon which all the other parts rest.

"The Corolla of plants is of different forms, and has, likewise, its various parts; the most conspicuous of which are the petals, varying in number. The office of the petal is to guard the internal and more essential parts of the flower, also to furnish a resting place for insects in search of honey, and to absorb light and liberate azotic gas for the benefit of the flower. Dr. Darwin esteems the corolla as the lungs of the stamen and pistils, and with great probability. The liberation of the oxygen, for the formation with caloric oxygen gas, is the support of all animated nature. The variety of parts in the corollas are very numerous, for the knowledge of which we refer the young student to regular botanical works, and as the different colours of flowers are known to all it will therefore be needless to enumerate them.

"The Peduncle of flowers is the foot-stalk of them, the same as the Petiole is that of the leaf.

"Some flowers are sessile, that is im-

mediately placed upon the stem; and some arise from even a leaf; but in general they have an intermediate wiry substance into which all the parts seem contracted, and which, by varying in length, give the most commodious situation of the flowers with respect to light.

"How necessary is light to plants, without it they would be colourless; it seems to enter as a component part, and probably helps the decomposition of water. A plant, when left in a dark room, has been known to extend its branches and creep to a hole, escaping from its confinement in search of light; and if Geraniums are changed from their accustomed place to a different aspect, you may perceive them at first appear as if in disorder, and, in a short time their leaves will be turned in an opposite direction, in order to face the light. Plants, in hothouses always present the front of their leaves to the light; and even the branches are influenced by it. If the branches of a

trained fruit tree be disturbed, the leaves soon resume their natural position.

"Leaves are organs of perspiration, a large Sun-flower has been known to lose fourteen ounces in the course of a hot day, but in a rainy night has gained two or three ounces. Evergreens are found to perspire less than other shrubs.

"Leaves are not only ornamental but necessary to the growth of the plant, and we find, if stripped of many of them by the depredation of insects or other causes, the plant droops and sometimes dies.

"All plants produce fresh leaves every year, though not all at the same time. Spring is the general period, but Winter is the time for Mosses.

"The twining of plants is to be remarked as very curious; some twine in a spiral manner, with the sun, as the Hop; while others, on the contrary, take an opposite direction, from right to left, against the Sun.

Very important appendages to plants

are the Tendrils, by means of which weak and tender plants elevate themselves so as to enjoy light and air, without which they would sicken and die. The Passion-flower, by means of its tendrils, rises sometimes to the height of trees; and the Vine, whose branches are so long and fragile, would frequently break were it not for their claspers, which serve to bind and support them together. Some species of Ivy emit tendrils, which serve the place of roots.

The Calyx, or outer expanded part of the flower, is an expansion of the rind and bark; and it is to be observed, that in those flowers not in want of it, it is not found. We have the example in the Lily, the petals of which being so firm and fleshy there is no Calyx; but in the Carnation, whose petals are long and slender, there is a strong Calyx, and a Perianth, increased with scales at bottom, and five large teeth at top, which close inwards before the flower expands.

"Of the different Pericarps, or seed vessels, botanists distinguish ten sorts; they are, the Drupe, the Pome, the Berry, the Follicle, the Silique, the Silicle, the Legume, the Capsule, the Nut, and the Strobile; and these contain all the various kinds of seed belonging to the vegetable kingdom.

"Before we proceed further in this short and imperfect sketch of the science of botany, it may be right to inform our young hearers, that the sexual system of Linnæus has of late undergone several changes; Thunberg, a pupil of Linnæus, has abolished classes 20, 21, 22, and 23, and Professor Genelin, at Gottingen, has abolished class 12, and Dr Thornton has attempted almost a new system from the old one, which has been much approved. But, as the sexual system is the foundation of all others, no student can proceed in the science without being well acquainted with the original one, after which he may

study the reformed sexual system by Dr. Thornton.

"When the young student has acquired some knowledge of the classes, orders, and genera of plants, he may, with the aid of a Botanical Grammar in his hand, proceed to examine a plant scientifically.

"The White Lily is a flower often selected for young beginners, having six large fleshy petals, three of which have a ridge in the middle. These petals, when expanded, form a beautiful bason, out of which project the six stamina, whose anthers hang upon a point, so that they vibrate with every gale, and open their cells by the sides folding back, disclosing their farina. The stigma of the pistallum is large, for the reception of the farina, which passes down the style to vivify the seeds lodged in the germen, which afterwards becomes a pericarp or seed vessel.

"The different botanical works published for the use of young students, give examples in what manner, according to

the rules of the science, a plant is to be described, and which becomes the practical part of botany, and when the plant itself is not to be obtained drawings must be referred to.

"The manner of preserving plants is likewise useful for young students to be acquainted with; this is termed a Hortus-Siccus, and performed in the following manner:—After having collected as good a specimen as possible of the plant, lay it flat, disposing of it in the best manner, so that the flower and leaves do not interfere with each other, betwixt a sheet of white paper; put this on a quire of blotting paper, with another quire over, and then place a weight on the top. The next day fresh blotting paper must be put, as before, first opening the sheet of white paper to make any alteration in the disposition of the parts of the plant as may appear necessary. When the plant is perfectly dry, it may be fixed into slips of paper, or glued with thin glue.

Bulbous Roots.

"We have not yet said any thing with respect to Bulbous Roots, and will therefore observe that the bulb was considered by botanists as a root, till Linnæus corrected the error, and shewed that it was a single bud, enveloping the whole plant. It is a substance, tender and succulent, composed of several tunicks or coats which cover one another and is terminated beneath by a fleshy portion, from which issues small radicles which constitute the root, and is either tuberous or fibrous.

"The bulbous root contains, in the winter the perfect plant, even the flowers with their stamina and pistils, but in a blanched state.

"The fibrous root, when it descends in a straight line, is called a perpendicular

root, and then this part of the root is called the tap root; if this be cut, the side roots are increased, hence the advantage of cutting such roots designed for pots.

"The Arms of Plants, as they are termed, are of various kinds, as hairs, bristles, down, &c. and spines or thorns, all serving as a protection to the plant. They likewise serve in forming our hedges, and afford a shelter for birds. Linnæus observes, that thorns often disappear by culture, thus the Pear Tree, in its wild state, is defended with thorns, but from cultivation it loses this defence.

"In the rearing of plants attention must be paid to the nature of them, and the climate in which they were produced. Those plants brought from hot climates will, of course, require an additional degree of heat in our's; but it is singular that plants brought from colder climates do not bear the cold well in this country.

"Many plants of hot climates where they are perennial and even shrubby, become annual in our gardens, as the Mignionette, which in a warm latitude rises and appears like a bush.

"Lastly. To the tribe of Grasses we are indebted for the beautiful ground-work they form to all the rest; the earth is covered with a verdure that gives delight to the eye, and is the most pleasing contrast to the dazzling light of the sky. No colour is so agreeable to the sight as green, and this colour overspreads as it were the earth!—How much has man to praise and admire! If he turns his eyes upwards he is lost in wonder and delight, in the contemplation of those glorious orbs that roll through immeasurable space over his head!—On the earth he treads, he sees the same cause to wonder and admire!—and when, in pious gratitude, his thoughts ascend to the great Creator of all, he feels that man was made to praise and to adore!"

CHAP. XVI.

NEW-YEAR'S DAY,

DINNER AT THE RECTORY, &c.

"I CANNOT think," said Charles to his sister, "what these new games can be, which they are to surprise us with to-night.—Pray do you know, Sophia?"

"No," replied his sister, "I am not in the secret, I assure you, Charles."

"But why are you so grave this morning, Sophia?" inquired Charles, "you know we are to be all gaiety to-day. You look too as if you had been crying; what can have disturbed you so?"

"It is true," returned Sophia, "I am grave, and have even shed tears; but, notwithstanding, I am not unhappy.—You are so different from me, Charles, you can forget, in five minutes, every thing you hear."

"Ah, I believe I can guess what it is," said Charles. "You are thinking, my dear sister, of what papa and mamma said to us, when we went to their bed-room this morning, to wish them a happy new year."

"I am, indeed, Charles," replied Miss Castlemain, "and hope you will think of it likewise; to hear their prayer to Heaven for our happiness in this world, and, which is of much greater consequence, the one that is to come! And then my dear mamma embraced us all, and seemed so much affected when she talked of these things!—Surely children must be very unfeeling and wicked who can grieve their parents intentionally, and not to love those who love us so much is very unnatural."

"I hope I do not grieve my parents, Sophia," returned Charles.

"I hope not, Charles," replied Sophia; "but, I must say, I often think you are not so attentive to them as you ought to be, nor to Mr. Wilson neither.—But as you grow older, I dare say you will become more thoughtful."

"I will endeavour to be so, my dear sister," returned Charles; "and, as I know it is from kindness you tell me of my faults, I will begin this very year, and try if I cannot be more like you. But I hope, Sophia, you do not think I love my parents less because I am lively?"

"Perhaps not, my dear Charles," said his sister, "but if we do not shew our affection, how is it to be known? I hope, therefore, your endeavour henceforward will be to do every thing to please them, and then you will be more attentive to your studies."

"I mean to be so, I assure you," replied young Castlemain; "and now let us

talk about what we are to do to-day.—You know, sister, mamma has settled that we and all the young ones should go first, as the carriage would not hold all together, even supposing George Herbert and I were to walk, and we are to be ready at two o'clock. First of all, sister Sophia, George Herbert, myself, and little Louisa and Frederick; and the second time, papa and mamma, Mr. Herbert and Mr. Wilson."

"Yes," returned Sophia, "I have been informed of the whole arrangement by mamma, who at the same time desired we would be all ready when the carriage drove to the door, as it would have to go twice. I shall, therefore, set the example of going first to dress, and advise you and George Herbert to do the same."

They then separated, though not without a cordial embrace on the part of Charles, who assured his sister, his promise that day should not be forgotten.

Our young party were met, on their alighting at the Rectory, by the worthy

pastor and his family, with an affectionate embrace and kindest wishes on the entrance of the new year.

"My dear young friends," said Mrs. Egerton, looking at her own family of seven children, in a groupe round the Castlemain's, "to see you thus altogether, is the most pleasing sight I could behold.—We have enjoyed this happy meeting for three successive new years, and may we long continue to celebrate the day in the same manner."

The young folks soon formed their two parties of the elder and younger ones, and we shall leave them in the enjoyment of their chit-chat till dinner time.

At four o'clock the two families, with the addition of two gentlemen of the neighbourhood, sat down to dinner, which though a plain one was not the less enjoyed by the company. The intercourse of social friendship is truly considered amongst the first enjoyments of life, and no two families could be more sincerely

attached to each other than those of the Baronet and Mr. Egerton.

Without entering into the minutiæ of the dinner, we shall observe that the five younger children, accustomed to dine in the nursery, were placed at a side table, with the second Miss Egerton to preside, by which regulation a too great number was avoided at the other table, as also the interruption an attention to children causes to conversation.

The evening and the amusing games they were to partake in, was what particularly engaged the thoughts of the young people, nor would it be right to omit describing some of them.

After the company were assembled in the drawing-room, and had taken their coffee, one card table was made for Lady Castlemain and the gentlemen who sat down to whist.—The rector and his wife, as we have before observed, never played at cards, nor had the young people of either family recourse at any time to them for

amusement, not even to a round game.—Cards are certainly to be considered as a most pernicious habit for youth, when allowed to play for money, the love of gain is generally seen to prevail with the successful player, and if otherwise, too often vexation and ill-humour are perceptible; but cards, at any rate for young people, should be avoided, as the most idle of all recreations; the powers of the mind are not called forth in any way, and the various amusing games, invented purposely for them, are on every account to be preferred, they excite cheerfulness, and are not without a view to some instruction.

The elder part of the company being disposed of as we have described, in alternately cutting in at the whist and backgammon table, the younger ones took their station together, at one end of the room, at some distance, so that their amusements were not an interruption to others.

The conductor of the games for this

evening was young Egerton, who informed his friends that he had several to propose to them, some of which they were, no doubt, acquainted with.

"First, was the game of Twelve or of Ten, being so many questions, by which the person was to guess the thing meant: if it was a celebrated man or woman, signified, ten questions only were allowed; and if inanimate things, twelve. I will give an example of each. I fix on the most renowned General of his age; the person then asks in what century he lived, in what part of the world, &c. with many other leading questions to the number of ten. If a thing or animal is meant, you are to ask if it belongs to vegetables, minerals, &c. or to what class of minerals, and what is its use, &c.—and it may be applied to flowers and plants, if those playing understand Botany.

"The other games of Relation or Affinities, and Substantives with the Abstract Nouns, I need not describe, if you are

acquainted with them." Charles and his sister said they were not, and desired to hear them described. Young Egerton then resumed—

"In the game of Relation or Affinities, you are to name any two objects, and the person is to say what the relation or affinity is that subsists between them; for example, I ask what affinity is there between a bird of prey and a dishonest person? the answer might be, that they are both seeking to lay hold of what they ought not. Or what affinity is there between a ruin and a clock? the answer would be, that they both mark the flight of time. The art of this game is, to name two things that do not at first appear to bear any resemblance to each other.

"The game of Abstract Nouns, as Virtue, Vice, Kindness, Industry, &c. is played partly the same as that of other Substantives, which you know; but as it is not suited for children, the little ones could not join us, therefore we will leave

this at present. And now, ladies and gentlemen," continued young Egerton, "which do you like beginning with?"

The question was then referred to Miss Castlemain, as being the visitor.—"I think," replied she, "the game of Twelve or Ten must be very entertaining."

She was then desired to fix upon a person or thing, which she did, choosing a celebrated character mentioned in History. She was then asked, whether ancient or modern, in what century he lived, in what quarter of the globe, &c.

The person was guessed by Miss Egerton, and proved to be Constantine the Great, the first Christian Emperor.

They then proceeded, going first to the young ladies, when the second Miss Egerton fixed on an inanimate thing, of the vegetable kingdom, which was discovered to be an Oak. This game went round the whole of the young people, and afforded them much entertainment.

They were now proceeding to the last

game of Actions, when the party at the whist table, having finished their rubber, rose and joining the young ones said, they must take a game with them at Relations. Sir Harry began, by asking Miss Egerton what affinity there was between a kind friend and a skilful physician?

"I should think," replied she, "because they both heal the wounds of the suffering person, either in mind or body."

"Very well answered," returned the Baronet. "And now, my good Sir," said he, addressing Mr. Egerton, "you must puzzle some of the young ladies and gentlemen."

The latter, then turning to Miss Castlemain, said, "What is the affinity between gold and a good mind?"

"Because," answered Miss Sophia, "they are both pure."

"And what resemblance is there, Miss Caroline Egerton," said Mr. Herbert, "between the diamond and iron?"

"The one," replied she, "is the most va-

luable of precious stones, and the other of metals, and they are both equally hard."

The young people were all of them in turns addressed by the elder part of the company, who, in return, were likewise questioned by the young folks.

Mr. Wilson then proposed taking a round at the game of Abstract Nouns.—"In this game," said he, "you will find it necessary to reflect on invisible things, their qualities and their effect; and I will first ask Master Egerton the virtue I am thinking of and which most essentially contributes to the happiness of mankind?"

Young Egerton considered for a few minutes when he replied, "piety."

Sir Harry Castlemain, then turning to John Egerton said,—"I have fixed on the moral virtue that most conduces to the prosperity of a country at large, and I doubt not you can tell the company what it is?"

John immediately replied, "I suppose it must be industry."

"Perfectly right," rejoined the Baronet, "and I see, with much pleasure, that both of you young gentlemen shew a very visible progress in your education, highly to the credit of your school no less than to the instruction of your good father."

"I hope, Sir," said Charles, "I am to have a question too;—though I may not answer so well as the Master Egertons I shall like to be tried."

"By all means," replied his father, "and though you are a year younger than your friends, you ought not to be at a loss in answering any question on a general subject that may be put to you;—I dare say Mr. Herbert will think of some one to try you upon."

"Well then, tell me, my young friend," said the latter gentleman, "the vice I fix upon, the effects of which are to be dreaded by all ranks and by all ages?"

"I should suppose," replied Charles, "it may be idleness, since the rich ought to be employed in cultivating their minds, if

they do not labour with their hands like the poor."

"Perfectly right," cried Mr. Herbert, "you have acquitted yourself extremely well."

The gentlemen then returned to the card table, and the young people continued their games, but the evening proved much too short for all their amusement, and ten o'clock was announced by saying supper was served. This was most unwelcome news to the young party, for the concluding game had not yet been thought of.

"What is to be done?" said young Egerton to his mother.

"We must apply to Lady Castlemain," answered she, "and petition her to remain here an hour later."

This request being complied with, the game that was to conclude the evening's entertainment was now prepared for, by every one standing up, ranked as a file of soldiers, with their commander at their

head. The amusement of this game of Command of Actions, depended very much on the one who gave the word of command; and as young Egerton had previously studied his part with his brothere, he went through it extremely well, and multiplied the different movements so quickly, that few performed them correctly or in right time. The aukwardness of those who had not before played was a cause of merriment to the others, nor could the ladies and gentlemen spectators refrain joining in the laugh.

"As the time will not permit this evening," said the young commander to his friends, "I must defer some of the intended actions and movements to another opportunity, and shall only give two more now, which are, first, that you altogether hop three steps forward and backward, quick time."

This command, as may be supposed, was but aukwardly performed, and many had the laugh against them. "The other," said the chief, "is, first, that the ladies all,

with their hands behind them, make a low bow to the company, after which, the gentlemen all, make a low courtesy with their hands crossed before, in a dancing position, and the courtesy to be a remarkably low one. The attempts of boys making a low courtesy, was followed, as might be expected, with several tumbles, to the great amusement of the company, and so much laughing went round that they declared it should always be their finishing game, and ought to be called the merry game.

"And now, my young friends," said Mrs. Egerton, "I am sure you must be ready for some refreshment after all your exertions, and we will go and take our sandwiches."

Sandwiches were not, however, the only thing; they found a nice cold supper was prepared, which they very much enjoyed.

The happy new year's day was now ended, and the servant soon entered to say the carriages were ready. They were, it

was true, to meet again on the morrow, "but it will not be," observed Charles Castlemain, "to talk and laugh as we have done this day."

Every thing relating to the intended visit to Miss Mordaunt, the following morning, had been previously settled between the two families.—Lady Castlemain was to call for Mrs. Egerton and her daughters, Mr. Egerton would take his two sons in their gig, and the Baronet with Mr. Herbert in his carriage, and Mr. Wilson with his pupil, Charles, and George Herbert were to proceed in another gig.

CHAP. XVII.

SCHOOLS OF INDUSTRY.

" IN order to reach the Lodge by twelve o'clock, the hour named by Miss Mordaunt," observed Sir Harry to his Lady, " as the distance is full ten miles and the roads but indifferent, it will be requisite for you to set out by ten; but myself and Mr. Herbert, in his light travelling carriage, may make it half an hour later, as we shall go much quicker than the coach."

The Baronet and his friend Mr. Herbert enjoyed their tête-a-tête, in the post chaise,

and the latter gentleman was much gratified by hearing some particulars relative to the benevolent founder of the school they were going to visit.

"The story of this lady," said Sir Harry, "is a very simple one,—she lived with her father, who had retired from business with a large fortune; and, as he had no other child except Miss Mordaunt, her dutiful attentions were the comfort of his declining years. The old gentleman died about seven years since, and left his daughter the sole inheritor of all he possessed.—Miss Mordaunt has hitherto declined every offer made to her for marrying, and probably will continue so to do, being now turned of forty; influenced, no doubt, by the great benevolence she possesses, to dedicate the greater part of her fortune to these laudable purposes."

"She has no wish to shine in the polite world, it is evident," observed Mr. Herbert, "or she would not continue to lead so retired a life."

"She must, no doubt, be fond of retirement," continued the Baronet; "but, I am inclined to think her's is not an inactive life. I am told, she pays great attention to the school within her domain; and the other charitable institutions which she overlooks, must fill up great part of her time. Her domestic circle is enlivened by the society of a friend, a Mrs. Brooke, to whom Miss Mordaunt is very much attached, and in whom she finds a useful assistant in all her benevolent labours."

"This is indeed," rejoined Mr. Herbert, "a very pleasing sketch of female excellence; and are the two schools of the same description?"

"Not exactly similar, I believe," replied the Baronet, "that in the village is a general School of Industry, like those established in the different parishes of the metropolis, where the new system is adopted for educating the children of the poor. The only part Miss Mordaunt takes in this school (after having had a plain

but handsome building erected for the purpose) is to pay the salary of a master and a mistress to the school, under the direction of the clergyman of the parish. She has, I am informed, already made over a sum sufficient for the support of both schools, so that at her demise there will be no alteration.

"Her own, or "The Mordaunt School," as it is called, is built within the park, at about half a mile from the house, and is rendered a very pretty and picturesque object, bearing the appearance of a Grecian Temple. This school is for girls only, and limited to thirty; but these are maintained, and live in the house with the person who is appointed to instruct them. It is admirably conducted, I am informed, but the particulars relating to it I do not know. This is the first time of our visiting Miss Mordaunt, to witness the third anniversary of the institution, and a very pleasing sight I am told it is."

"And the name of Mordaunt will be

blessed in these villages when their liberal benefactress is no longer an inhabitant of this world!" said Mr. Herbert. "This new system of educating is now very generally adopted," continued he, "in all the public charitable institutions."

"Where there are numbers to instruct, it must prove of the greatest utility," replied Sir Harry, "and it is only surprising that so simple a system should not have been discovered centuries back, and which (as a means of facilitating the instruction of the poor) ought certainly to be considered a national benefit of this age. But we shall now soon join the ladies, for I see the carriage and the two gigs, and a short time will take us to the entrance of the park."

Several other carriages were now observed, all directing their course towards Miss Mordaunt's. Their arrival was followed by that of many others, and so large a party had never yet assembled on the anniversary day.

Miss Mordaunt, with Mrs. Brooke, received the company with great politeness, testifying the pleasure it gave her to see so many visitors to look at her little girls, who, she hoped, would be grateful for the notice shewn them. A very handsome sideboard was set out with refreshments on the occasion, of which every one partook before they proceeded to the schoolroom. After chatting some time the company followed Miss Mordaunt, who observed, as it was so fine a morning she hoped the ladies would not find it too long a walk through the shrubbery. To Lady Castlemain and her friends a particular attention was shewn, it being their first visit; another powerful motive strengthened their friendship, which was the similarity of disposition between the two ladies. Benevolence was the prevailing principle of every action with Miss Mordaunt the same as with Lady Castlemain, and the present meeting afforded an equal pleasure to both. Miss Mordaunt walked be-

side Lady Castlemain and Sir Harry, who admired all they saw; the grounds were so tastefully laid out, and the cottages seen at a distance exhibited such an appearance of uniform neatness, being all of them white, that they seemed placed as so many objects for ornament, to add beauty to the scene. The Temple too, which they now approached, was on a rising ground, and formed a conspicuous object from this part of the park.

The Temple was of white stone, with a handsome portico and pillars in front; but on entering it the idea of a temple was entirely lost, and it bore the appearance of a comfortable house, consisting of one large room on the ground floor (the school room), and two smaller; the principal room extended the whole length of the building, and was sufficiently spacious for thirty girls, at their different tables, without being crouded, and was light and airy.

On the present occasion, the arrangement was different from any other day;

one long table was placed in the middle of the room, on which was laid various specimens of the girls' work, &c. with the tokens to be distributed as rewards of books and medals. When the company entered, the thirty girls stood on one side the room, ranked according to their age, the eldest being at their head, near the school mistress. They were dressed in light grey stuff gowns, with dark blue ribbons on their caps, and each of them had the medal of the last year round her neck, hanging to a ribbon of the same colour as that on her cap, which, with their white tippets and mittens, bore a very neat and pleasing appearance.

A chair was placed at the head of the table for their benefactress, who distributed the rewards; and round the table were chairs for the ladies of the company.

When every one was seated, Miss Mordaunt took the paper the school mistress presented to her, on which was the name of each girl, with a testimonial of her ge-

neral behaviour, and the progress she had made in work, reading, and writing.—The specimens of plain-work, knitting, and spinning were then handed round to the ladies, and which deservedly obtained approbation. Some of the girls then recited Hymns, and answered to different questions in the religious instruction they received, in all which they were perfectly correct.

This examination took up nearly two hours, after which Miss Mordaunt distributed the rewards:—Each girl on going up to her had a medal placed round her neck, also a small book neatly bound, presented to her, with a smile of approbation. On each of these silver medals was inscribed, First or Second Class, on one side; and on the other, Reward, for whatever it was obtained, either reading, writing, work, or good behaviour, which always received a reward of the first class, as did likewise attention to religious instruction; these two points being consi-

dered of more consequence than any particular progress in other things.

To say that the company were gratified with what they witnessed, is but faintly conveying the feelings of some present.—To such kind of instruction the young may be indebted for the happiness of their future lives, and for a felicity which may reach beyond this life; and these feelings were expressed with great satisfaction by the Rector of Broomsdale, jointly with the Castlemain family, when taking leave of Miss Mordaunt; nor was this lady less gratified in the approbation testified by characters of such known worth, emulous, like herself, of every good deed.

The conversation, on their return, still dwelt on Miss Mordaunt and her benevolent establishment, and Lady Castlemain informed her friends that she had learned some further particulars relative to the school. That as the girls there were in general destined for service, Miss Mordaunt has them kept in the school to

the age of sixteen, and then places are provided for them by herself, either in private families or with respectable farmers. Each girl, on leaving the school, has cloaths given her, and five pounds in money, and if their future conduct proves to her satisfaction, they will always find her a friend. "Such are the rules," said Lady Castlemain, "of this excellent establishment, and for which, the country round will, in a few years, acknowledge themselves indepted to her for valuable servants from this excellent school."

"And may we not hope," added Mr. Herbert, "that others will be found to follow her good example, where such establishments are wanted?"

CHAP. XVIII.

Mr. Wilson's Third and Last Lecture.

"I AM sorry to find," said Miss Sophia to her mamma, "that Mr. Wilson does not give another Lecture on Botany."

"I suppose he is not prepared for any more at present," replied Lady Castlemain, "and he thought, probably, you would like a variety; but I dare say he has made choice of a subject equally improving."

At this moment Charles entered with a Prospectus of the intended Lecture, from which they were informed that it would treat on Light and Vision, and the formation of the Human Eye.

"These are, indeed, very learned subjects," rejoined Sophia; "but Mr. Wilson describes every thing in so plain a manner that any one may understand him."

"And then," added Charles, "he is generally very concise, so that he does not burden the memory with too much at once."

Lecture III.

On the Human Eye, Vision, Light, &c.

Mr. Wilson now addressed the company, saying,—"After my observations on some of the Works of Nature, I thought I could not present a better subject to the attention of my young hearers than to describe that organ by which we are enabled to behold them.

"Amongst the outward gifts bestowed on man," continued he, "no one is so highly to be valued as sight; without it

the beauties of nature would be lost to him, for no description could give any adequate idea of its varied magnificence. The wide extended landscape, and all the richness of its scenery, the lofty mountains, or the verdant plains, could afford him no delight! Of the comfort and utility of this wonderful organ, in the common pursuits of life, I need not speak, or say how lamentable is the state of those who are deprived of sight.

"The human form is, throughout, replete with wonder; but in no part more than the Eye. The anatomical description of it is as follows:—The human Eye is of a globular form, and larger, in general than those of animals; it is composed of three coats, covering and enclosing three different substances or humour, called the agneus, the crystaline, in the middle part of the eye, and the vitrious in the interior part of it. The three coats are called the salerotica, the choroides, and the retina.

"Every object we view is by means of their images painted on the retina of the eye, and seen erect, yet the images of objects are painted on the retina in an inverted state."

To illustrate this description, Mr. Wilson here shewed the company a section drawn of the eye.—The three circles representing the three coats, the outer one being the salerotica, a part of which is termed the cornea; the middle circle, choroides, the fore part of which is iris; and the inner circle representing the retina, which receives the images of the objects produced by the refraction of the three different humours of the eye, from the hinder part of which appeared the optic nerve, which conveys to the brain the sensations produced on the retina.

Mr. Wilson then resumed:—"The eye may be justly termed a natural telescope, wonderfully formed, and no less wonderfully assisted by various muscles which mutually aid each other to govern and di-

rect the motion of the eye. Some of these muscles enable us to open the eye, others to turn it downwards, and all performing their respective parts required.

"After this description of the formation of the eye, I must add a few words on the outward appearance. The colour and expression of the eye adds greatly to the beauty of the human countenance; it conveys the ideas of the mind, and enables us to understand all its feelings.—A look is sometimes more prevailing than words, it implores, commands, and forbids; and by the expression of the eye we often form a judgment of the disposition of the person.

"But, leaving these philosophical observations, we will return to the scientific part of our Lecture, and make a few remarks on the dimness of sight which attends old people, and on the defects that are sometimes seen at every age.

"Dimness of sight, when from age, proceeds either from the eye growing flatter, or the humours of the eye losing in some de-

gree their natural transparency, from either of which causes objects appear fainter and more indistinct. The defective sight is generally owing to the eye being too round, or too flat; these defects as well as dimness, are assisted by glasses. The eye that is too round requires concave glasses, and that which is too flat convex glasses.

"After giving this account of the human eye, I can but add, that however habit may familiarize us with its operation and effects, it is not the less wonderful, or the less worthy our admiration. That we should, by the help of so small an organ, be enabled to discern distant objects, as well as those near to us, and that we should be able to form a true idea of their various proportions and magnitude, is altogether above our comprehension. The formation of our bodies may be known, and the skilful anatomist can tell us how its inward parts are disposed and combined; but to discover the manner in which many of its operations are performed to-

wards sustaining life, or the connexion which subsists between these and the faculties of the mind, is beyond the reach of science. That Power, who has given life, can alone tell, and in shewing us our ignorance, and the prescribed limits he has assigned to us, we are to acknowledge that '*in him we live, and move, and have our being!*"

Of Light.

"I WILL now proceed to speak upon other subjects;—and first on Light, and the nature of it, as known to us.

"Light consists of an inconceivably great number of particles, flowing from a luminous body in all manner of directions, the particles of light must be indeed small, for its rays cross each other in every possible direction, without the least confusion.

"By a ray of light is meant the motion of a single particle.

"The light of a candle, if there be nothing to obstruct its passage, will fill the whole space within a mile round, before it has lost the least sensible part of its substance.

"Light travels from the sun to the earth in about eight minutes of time, that is at the rate of nearly two hundred thousand miles in a second.

"The rays of light move always in straight lines, as no object can be seen through the bore of a bended pipe, and the point at which converging rays meet is called the focus.

"The luminous body which gives light to our system, is nearly a million of times larger than the earth; and Dr. Herchell with others, think the sun is a magnificent and a habitable planet.

"Nothing known in nature moves so swift as light. Sound travels only at the rate of one mile in nearly five seconds of time; but light at the rate of almost two hundred thousand miles in one second of

time. Light passes, through the medium of air, to the earth. A medium must be a transparent body, such as water, air, glass, &c. When rays of light pass obliquely out of one medium, which is either more dense, or more rare, they are bent out of their former course, and are then said to be refracted;—and when rays of light strike against a surface and are sent back from it, they are said to be reflected.

"Every point of a visible body reflects the rays of light in all manner of directions.—If rays recede from each other they are said to diverge, and when they approach each other they are said to converge.

Of the different refrangibility of the Rays of Light.

"Light is not a simple homogeneous body, but compounded of seven different species or colours, each of which, in pass-

ing from one medium to another, suffers a different degree of refrangibility.

"To examine the different colours of a ray of light, a small hole may be made in the shutter of a dark room, and the ray must fall upon a prism in an oblique direction.

"The Rainbow is formed by the reflection and refraction of the rays of the sun's light from the drops of falling rain. The colours of the rainbow are frequently visible among the waves of the sea, the tops of which are blown by the wind into small drops; the are too, sometimes seen on the ground when the sun shines on a thick dew.—Cascades and fountains, likewise, frequently exhibit the appearance of rainbows.

"Mirrors reflect the rays of light which fall upon them, and thus represent the images of every object. There are three kinds of mirrors—the plane, or common looking-glass, the concave, and the convex.

"The rays of light that pass through a concave mirror are collected in its focus.

For the different experiments in optics glasses are ground in a particular manner, so as to collect or disperse the rays of light which pass through them. These glasses are called lens, and are of different forms, as concave, convex, double concave, and others. The construction of burning glasses, as they are termed, are all double convex lenses, and even a globular decanter of water, exposed to the rays of a hot sun, has been known to set furniture on fire, acting as a double convex lens.

"From the sun we not only receive light and colour, but heat also; it enlivens and gives colour to every object, and communicates heat even where its rays cannot penetrate.

"The seven primary colours are the red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet; but these are reducible to three, viz. the red, the blue, and the yellow.

"That part of optics treating on colours is called chromatics; and on this curious

subject I shall say but little, fearing it might prove too intricate for my young friends. I will, therefore, only add, from the Newtonian doctrine, that all colours in nature proceed from the rays of light, and that every ray of light may be separated into seven primary colours, which all proceed from the different degrees of refrangibility; and that the rays of light, in passing through the same medium, have different degrees of refrangibility.

"The opinion formerly entertained of the sun being a body of fire is no longer admitted. To what then is heat owing? So far we know, the earth we inhabit is situated in such a manner as to receive the degree of light and heat necessary for all its productions, for supplying all our wants, and for the enjoyment of every comfort.

"In making a philosophical inquiry on these subjects, however, we must state the opinions now received:—The medium by which this earth receives light and heat

from the sun is the atmosphere which surrounds it; the vapours which arise from the earth ascend to a certain height, generally supposed about forty miles, and mixing with the pure air, or subtile fluid which fills all space, becomes the atmosphere in which we live, composed, therefore, only in part of pure air or oxygen, the other parts being formed of vapours and clouds, or hydrogen, or azotic gas, as termed by chemists. That the infinite number of particles which arise from the earth in the form of vapours, or of dry exhalations from minerals, vegetables, and animals, whether by means of the sun or by that of subterranean fires, added to the electric fluid of all bodies, must necessarily render the atmosphere more dense and warm nearest the earth, and cooler and more rare in proportion to its distance from the surface. Hence it is, that we find at great heights, and on the tops of mountains always the coldest air.

"The atmosphere is, therefore, warm in

proportion to the quantity of earthly exhalation it contains, and other or pure air is always cold. This elementary or pure air, and vital air as it is sometimes called, as life cannot be sustained without it, is a subtile homogeneous and elastic matter, but of the fluid that we breathe, only one fourth, or less, according to the most accurate computation, is this pure air, the remaining parts being composed of those particles of heterogeneous matter which floats in the air of our atmosphere. On the free course of this atmospherical fluid its purity depends; wherever it is confined it becomes injurious to health, and retains damp and pernicious effluvia.

"This invisible fluid, which surrounds us, and which contains that portion of vital air necessary to our existence, is likewise the medium that conveys to our earth the blessings of light and heat. It extends, however, as we have before observed, only to a certain distance round the surface of our globe; at a greater height

than forty-five miles it will not refract the rays of light from the sun. Of that immeasurable space beyond it we can give no account, but that the stars are there placed; and though modern astronomy opens to our view so enlarged and sublime a display of the heavenly bodies, yet we must ever feel and confess the insufficiency of human wisdom, and, that after all which science can teach us, our's is but an imperfect knowledge. Above all, it should teach us humility, since, in our present state, we can know '*but part of His ways*.' Hereafter, we shall see light in the bosom of light itself."

This being Mr. Wilson's last Lecture at the present time, he received the thanks of the company. Sir Harry Castlemain observed, that the young hearers, he hoped, would profit by the information these lectures had contained, and which Mr.

Wilson had, with great kindness, adapted to their years.

"The very great attention the young people have paid to them affords me much pleasure," returned Mr. Wilson, "and where this is found, the trouble of instruction becomes the most pleasing of all employments."

The following day, the 4th of January, was the birth day of little Louisa Castlemain, who now entered her fifth year.—Upon occasions of this kind, the family at the Manor House were remarked for the manner in which they celebrated these family days; and, the evening preceding, a conversation on the subject passed between the Baronet and his Lady, with their friend Mr. Herbert.

"To-morrow," said Lady Castlemain, addressing their visitor, "our objects and amusements will be of quite a different

kind from those sublime subjects which have this day been so gratifying to us; it is our little daughter's birth day, and, as the attention paid by us to these days may appear to some rather more than necessary, I will mention the motives which influence us. We think that particular indulgence shewn to children of any age is rather hurtful to them than otherwise, if not made the reward or encouragement for their well-doing, and it is with this view we have always allowed our children every possible indulgence, when deserving of it, on their birth days."

"You will, indeed, my friend," said Sir Harry, "see no small stir throughout the house; every one takes a share in the infantile amusements of the day,—all wear the young lady's colour, and you will not object, I hope, my friend, to have a little bow of blue ribbon fastened to the button hole of your waistcoat to-morrow?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Herbert, "so far from it, that it always gives me

pleasure to see well educated children enjoying any unusual gratification, and none, I am sure, can be better entitled to such indulgence than your's. Indeed, every regulation in this house is so truly praiseworthy, that I only regret it cannot be made the pattern for others."

CHAP. XIX.

A CHILD'S BIRTH-DAY.

AFTER the accustomed family morning prayers, at which the worthy Baronet failed not to invoke the blessing of heaven on his child, the happy family assembled for breakfast, when Louisa, the little heroine of the day, now four years old, entered, accompanied by her brother Frederick, a year older than herself, carrying a basket filled with the favours of light blue ribbon.

"See, Mamma," cried Louisa, "what pretty bows sister Sophia has made for me!—And now, you know, I am to give every one their bow, and to pin it on

myself." She then began to distribute her favours, beginning with her dear mamma, pinning it on her bosom, and then proceeding in due order, as the persons stood in her affections.—Secondly came her papa,—then her sister, who was so good to her, she said, and taught her to read, and gave her so many pretty hymns to learn.—"And now, brother Frederick," continued she, "that I love very much, who is always my play-fellow.—Then brother Charles, though he teases me a little sometimes."—Next followed Mr. Wilson, who, she said, was so good to her brother Charles, and taught him every thing.—Lastly came Mr. Herbert and his son, who, she said, she liked very well, but she could not love them so much as those she had known a great while.

Her mamma then observed to her, she was glad to see she loved those who were good to her, and that it was her duty to do so; but that she ought to have presented the favour first to Mr. Herbert, because he

was a visitor. Her mistake, however, would be excused this day, as it was the first birth day she had celebrated in company.

The young lady was then seated at the head of the table, in the place of honour, by her mamma, and partook, on this occasion, of the nice French rolls, and whatever she liked best at breakfast.

Louisa was a pretty fair girl with fine blue eyes, like her mother's, and her light hair, and the ribbon of the same colour tied across her forehead, gave to her innocent countenance very much the look of a little cherub. Her fond parents, no doubt thought the resemblance perfect, and they looked at her this morning with more than usual delight. This little girl was too of an affectionate disposition, and a general favourite throughout the house.

"Louisa," said her mother, when breakfast was over, "you will soon see your visitors, as they are all to be here very early,—the two youngest Miss Egertons,

Jane and Emma, whom you are so fond of. You will likewise have two other little girls you never had before; they are exactly of your own age, and their parents are very good people, though they are poor, having a great many children to take care of."

"Oh, then, Mamma," interrupted little Louisa, "I know how I must behave to them,—I must be very kind to them, and think how I should like they would behave to me, if I was a poor little girl."

"Exactly so, my love," cried her father, catching her up in his arms and kissing her, then seating her on his knee, said he should keep her there till her mamma had finished what she had to tell her.

"The names of these two little girls, my dear," continued her mother, "are Peggy White and Fanny Goodhall, and their fathers both work in our grounds. I need not remind you to be kind to these children, my little Louisa, after what you have just now said, it is unnecessary; but I

must tell you, you are likewise to make them presents on your birth-day, which I shall do for you till you grow older.—Each of them are to have a new frock, a pair of shoes, and a straw bonnet tied with a blue ribbon; and you will see them to-day, dressed in all these things, which they have had sent to them. They will always be your play fellows on your birth day, while you are a little girl, and, after that, you must be kind to them, Louisa, and give them cloaths sometimes, out of your own pocket money, as your sister Sophia does to Mary Jones and Martha White, who is Peggy's elder sister. And now, my love, you may go and give your ribbons up stairs, for every one of the servants, men and women, must have one of your favours, as a token of your kindness; and I hope you remembered to give nurse, this morning, the present I put up for her, and to thank her, as I told you, for having nursed you so kindly when you was a little baby?"

"Oh yes, indeed, Mamma, I did, the first thing after I was dressed," answered Louisa; "and I kissed her too, and told her I should always love her." The little girl then ran off, taking the basket with the remaining ribbons.

"How pleasing an object is an amiable child!" exclaimed Mr. Herbert; "but how soon does this charm of innocence in children disappear, and evil ways and perverse inclinations take its place, unless they are taught, whilst young, to do their duty to God and to their fellow creatures!"

"It is truly so," replied Sir Harry, "a child must be trained in the way he should go, and a deep impression made of the duties he ought to practise."

"I am so convinced of this, even at an early age," observed Lady Castlemain, "that I wish my children to feel, when they shew kindness and benevolence towards others, that it is only doing their duty; and this I have ever thought myself, whenever I have contributed to the

comfort of a fellow creature.—But if young persons are left at liberty to follow their own inclinations, and to give only when it suits them, they certainly will not be inclined to make any sacrifices for this purpose. I have, therefore, taught my children, from an early age, to be benevolent, and when they have an allowance as pocket money, that there must always be a part of it allotted for charitable purposes, and when their power increases their charities must do so likewise.—I think and hope, I may add, that my eldest daughter will, through life, never allow any selfish gratification to prevent her fulfilling her duty towards her neighbour, in whatever way it may be. It is with this view I have selected always a few of the village children, of their own age, to be the immediate and constant objects of their benevolence, and occasionally their companions, as a means, likewise, of checking that pride which often prevails with children born in affluence. My anx-

ious cares have ever been fully repaid in my eldest daughter, and the prayer I make for my little Louisa is, that she may become the model of her sister!"

Louisa at this moment entered with her sister Sophia, leading the two youngest Miss Egertons, and the little Charles, of the age of Frederick.—The arrival, likewise, of the two little girls from the village was announced.

"Let them come in," said Lady Castlemain, "that I may see you altogether."

Fanny and Peggy then entered,—they were very neatly dressed in white frocks, and pretty muslin caps trimmed with blue ribbon, sent by Lady Castlemain.

"You will all be very happy to day, I hope, my little friends," said her Ladyship, "and you may amuse yourselves, till dinner time, in the nursery; and you will dine in the room with us, at a little table by yourselves;—but you must remember, that during dinner you are to be very quiet.—Afterwards, you are to go and

play and dance in the great hall, which will be lighted up in honour of Louisa's birth-day."

She then kissed them all, and desired they might have some cake, up stairs, and any thing nurse thought they wanted more, before dinner, as they would not dine till four.

Little Louisa and Frederick were made still happier, when they were told by their sister that Miss Emma and Miss Jane Egerton, with their brother Charles, were not to go home that night, but would remain till Monday, to keep Twelfth-day with them.

It will be unnecessary to say any thing of the dinner, therefore shall only notice that the little party at the side table, the eldest of whom was not more than six years old, behaved extremely well. There was no talking; all remembered the injunctions given them—they reserved their gaiety till it was allowable for them to indulge it.

The festivities of the evening soon began, of which we must give some account. The Gothic-Hall has been already described, as exhibiting a relic of ancient grandeur, where the tenants were received by their Lord. On the present occasion it bore quite a different appearance; it was converted into a modern ball-room, lighted up with taste and elegance, the same as on a ball night. The two rows of pillars were lighted with coloured lamps, twining round them, and two large lustres were suspended in the middle part of the hall. Along the walls, on each side of the hall, the little arched windows no longer appeared, a hanging of azure blue cloth, with a drapery tastefully disposed, entirely concealed them. Here Lady Castlemain and her daughter led the little folks, and their surprise and delight on entering the hall may be easily imagined. Here they were to dance and amuse themselves for the evening. At seven o'clock the musicians came and the country dances immediately

began, in which all the female servants of the house joined them, with Miss Sophia and the young gentlemen. At ten o'clock a hot supper was provided for all the servants, as was customary on those days.

Thus this amiable mother of her family rendered all happy.—Her children were gratified, but it was always with the view to their improvement;—her servants enjoyed every comfort, and had indulgences which few, perhaps, meet with; yet none could be more attentive to the duties of their station, or any family more admirably regulated than that of "*The Manor House.*"

CHAP. XX.

SUNDAY.

THIS Sunday being the first in the new year, the worthy Rector of Broomsdale failed not to advert to it in his discourse from the pulpit.

"The commencement of the new year," said he, "should be a solemn memento to us all, to advance in the ways of holiness, and redeem the time that is past."

To the younger part of his congregation he made a particular address, exhorting them 'to remember their Creator in the

days of their youth.'—"You," said he, "who know your Catechism, and hear the explanation of it, remember the solemn things it contains;—by your baptismal vow, made in your name, you promise, when you are received as one of Christ's flock, that you will renounce the Devil and all his works,—that is, every thing sinful; and that you will keep God's holy will and commandments all the days of your life. This, as you have been told, is entering into a covenant with your Creator, but it is not repeating the words that will make you 'a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,' you must do the things which he has commanded, you must be obedient to your parents, thankful to your teachers, and kind to every one, loving your neighbour as yourself. Your excellent Catechism, which teaches every duty as it ought to be performed, tells you how you are to love God, 'with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength,' that is, above every thing on

earth;—that you are to worship him, to give him thanks, and to call upon him,—which is, praying to him daily; unless you approach him in prayer, you cannot expect he will bless and love you. It is from Him you receive every blessing you enjoy—he gave you life and he preserves it; and will, if you keep his commandments, hereafter receive you into his heavenly kingdom, through the merits of your Redeemer. In the Thanksgiving prayer you repeat at Church every Sunday, you acknowledge all the mercies of creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but, above all, you are thankful for the redemption of the world, at the same time that you confess your own unworthiness. I will hope, that you do not repeat this, or any other prayer, without due reverence, and that you think of what you are uttering. Remember, nothing can be concealed from an all-seeing God; he is in every place, and marks your ways and knows the very secrets of your hearts.

"May these solemn truths, my dear children, dwell in your minds, they are necessary for your present and for your eternal happiness; and may your increasing years, shew you to be growing in grace and in favour with the Most High.

"It is my duty to tell you of these things, to admonish you, and to watch over you as the appointed guardian of your souls. Like the steward, in the Gospel, I must one day give an account of the charge that has been committed to me; may you then, dear children, 'walk in the ways that are set before you,' that nothing may ever make you forget your religious duties, then will you fulfil those solemn promises made at your baptism—then will you truly become the children of God, and the inheritors of His Heavenly Kingdom."

CHAP. XXI.

TWELFTH-DAY.

THE thoughts of this day had long occupied the young people at the Manor House; Charles and his sister Sophia were to be the sole directors of every thing that related to the amusements of Twelfth-Night, — the characters for drawing, and the doing the honours of the cake. The only request made by Lady Castlemain was, that the drawing might be over by eight o'clock, for at that hour they would go to the hall and dancing would begin, which she did not wish should be prolonged to a very late hour.

The young people were, likewise, much pleased at the success of a little plan which Mr. Herbert had been so good as to assist them in bringing to bear without any one of the family knowing of it; this was, sending to Bath, for Characters, to draw on Twelfth-Night, and which were much talked of, as being in an uncommon style, and a poetical description annexed to each of the characters.

Charles and Sophia were quite at a loss how to obtain them; when, luckily, they heard, a few days back, that Mr. Herbert was going to send his man, Thomas, to Bath, to take lodgings for his reception when he quitted the Manor House; and by this means the characters were obtained and the secret kept.

"Every one will be so much surprised when they open their ticket!" said Charles. "I hope mamma will be pleased, and smile, when she reads her character, what do you think, Sophia?"

"I hope she may," rejoined his sister,

"and that every one will be pleased likewise. I am told, by Miss Egerton, that some of the poetry is very pretty, and that the vulgar characters which are generally introduced on these occasions are totally excluded from this set."

"And I think, Sophia," rejoined Charles, "the manner in which you intend to ornament the table, with flowers and the netting of green ribbon, will be very pretty. I hope it is all ready?"

"Yes, quite ready," replied Sophia; "and while we are at dinner, the cake and decorations will be taken into the drawing-room and placed on the table, as I shall direct, with a basket, ornamented with flowers, containing the characters sealed up; and over all this is to be thrown the green netting, which is not to be taken off till the drawing begins. But I see mamma is in the gravel walk, ready, with papa and Mr. Herbert; they are going to the new plantation with him this morning. It is the last day we shall have

the pleasure of his company for some time; to-morrow, you know, he leaves us, to go to Bath."

"I think he might put off his journey till next week," rejoined Charles, "but he is so desirous, he says, to fix upon the school for George, that he may not lose any more time."

"Mr. Herbert is perfectly right," returned Sophia, "for every one remarks how much George has been neglected."

"It is true he knows very little for a boy of ten years of age," observed Charles, "and then he has so many odd ways, though not so many as when he first came here."

"No," replied Sophia, "it is evident he wishes to improve, and that he attends to what his father has said. I know that papa and mamma are both very much pleased with him, and it is their wish that Mr. Herbert may fix on the school where our friends the Egertons are."

The young people now joined with the

rest of the family, and pursued their morning walk through the grounds, to take a view of the improvements lately made by Sir Harry. In the lower park the new road, and plantations, had given variety to the beauty of the scenery, and opened a wider approach to the house.

The situation of Broomsdale was rather a low one, but this disadvantage was compensated by a branch of the river winding in different directions through the grounds; and it might truly be affirmed, that the owner had shewn both his liberality and judgment in the several improvements he had made. Mr. Herbert expressed his admiration of the improvements both in the grounds and the house, during his absence from England, which might, no doubt, in part, be ascribed to the amiable Lady Castlemain, whose taste in all things was universally admired; nor was the display of taste only, what she aimed at, but that, likewise, which contributed to the comfort of every person in her house. The

rooms occupied by the servants, even the menial ones, exhibited the same appearance of neatness and order as any of the other apartments.

We have before noticed the admirable regularity which reigned throughout every department of this family, with the elegant arrangement of the table at all times, it will, therefore, be unnecessary to say any more, than that whoever visited the Manor House must ever leave it with admiration and regret.

The morning walk over, they returned home, to meet their friends from the Rectory, who were to pass the Twelfth-Day with them, and whose arrival they expected at an early hour. It was the last day George Herbert would pass with his young friends these holydays, and they wished for a long one; it was too, a very busy day of amusements. After dinner, which was to be an early one, the young people had to dress for the ball;—they were all to be in fancy dresses, and it was

settled, by Lady Castlemain, that they should, on leaving the dining-parlour, retire for this purpose, and be all dressed before the drawing began, as there would not be time after. This plan was accordingly adopted, and after dinner they all went up stairs, and the two ladies Mrs. Egerton and Lady Castlemain, entered the drawing-room alone. On seeing the table and cake with all the decorations, Mrs. Egerton exclaimed,—

"What pretty things are here!"

"It is quite a surprise to me," said Lady Castlemain, "and is, no doubt, Sophia's doing, who has kept it quite secret from us all."

"It is, indeed, all very tastefully arranged," observed Mrs. Egerton, "and the flowers, seen through the green net-work, look extremely pretty!"

Charles just then entered the room,—"I hope, Mamma," said he, "you like Sophia's performance?"

"Very much," replied his mother, "and

she has managed to do it all without making me a party concerned."

"She wished to surprise you," returned Charles; "and she will surprise you all, still more, by and by—but I must not say any thing."

"Whatever Miss Sophia does," rejoined Mrs. Egerton, "will be amiable and pleasing, like herself!"

The three young ladies now entered, making a very gay appearance; one in pink and silver, another in blue and silver, and the third in white and silver dresses.

"Upon my word, our ball-room will make quite an elegant appearance to-night," said Lady Castlemain; "I wish I had better partners for the Miss Egertons, and that they were more numerous."

"We do not wish for any others," replied Miss Egerton, "and we shall enjoy the dance as much as if we were more numerous."

"If you do not object to an old partner," observed Lady Castlemain, "I dare

say Sir Harry will be very happy to go down a dance with both you and your sister." Then, turning to her daughter, she said, "My dear Sophia, we have been quite agreeably surprised, by the pretty manner in which you have set out the cake; and, if your drawing is likely to take up much time, it will be necessary to begin as soon as you can, or your time for dancing will be short."

"Yes, Mamma," replied Sophia, "I think the drawing may be rather long, as there is reading with every character; we will, therefore, begin as soon as the gentlemen come in."

They very soon entered, when, after admiring all they saw, Sir Harry said,—

"We are quite ready to hear what is to be our lot for the evening; Charles, I conclude, is to be master of the ceremonies, for distributing the cake, &c."

Charles immediately went to the table, removed the netting, and, taking the basket which contained the characters, &c. he,

with due form, advanced first to Mrs. Egerton, who, on opening her packet, found a ticket, on which was painted a female figure, representing Modesty, and under it these verses:—

Modest Merit is my name,
If such merit you can claim;
When won, pray wear it at your breast,
For modesty's the certain test
Of head and heart, both good and wise:
Oh may I prove some lady's prize,
Who, add to this a grace of mind,
With that of person sweetly join'd.

"This is a most happy beginning," cried Sir Harry Castlemain; "and nothing could be better applied.—Who is the next, Charles?"

"Mr. Egerton, no doubt," he replied, and going to him presented the basket.—The Rector drew his ticket, which contained as follows:—

From hand profane, Ah! let me fall;
Or his, whose merit is but small:
For nobly gracious is my nature,
I'm lovely found in every feature.
I throw a veil o'er frailty's form,
'Tis giant vice, alone I scorn;
I weep the chances others blame,
Close up the wounds of grief and shame.
Are you alike in goodness found,
In kindest acts do you abound?
Then wear my name, it is your own,
For Charity I am alone.

"I am perfectly satisfied with my lot," said Mr. Egerton, smiling, "and hope I am not undeserving my ticket."

"So truly deserving of it," rejoined Lady Castlemain, "that one might suppose Dame Fortune was no longer blind."

Miss Egerton was the next that drew; and on her ticket was a pretty female figure, with these lines:—

Fair Gratitude is never found
A solitary guest;
For in the heart it doth abound,
With virtues pure and best.
For gratitude in humble heart
Is but another name;
For generous worth, that noble part,
The sons of fortune claim.
And do you feel that glow divine,
For kindnesses received
From friendship's hand, or kindred love,
You well belov'd shall live?

Miss Caroline Egerton followed her sister, and drew—Emulation.

Have you not heard of Emulation?
'Tis much talk'd of through the nation,
And noble is its use:
To imitate what we approve,
To form ourselves by what we love,
Are lessons taught at school.

"I shall now beg to present the basket to Lady Castlemain," said Charles; "and

hope her ticket may be equally well applied."—And so it proved, for she drew Benevolence.

Benevolence shall be the name
Of her or him, who best explain
The nature of this sacred duty,
To speak its use and heav'nly beauty.

"The explanation is already given," observed Mr. Egerton, "in the daily actions of the lady who has last drawn."

The whole company agreeing with the Rector, her Ladyship was not allowed to make any comment on this virtue.

"And now," said the Baronet, "as it is plain all your characters are to shew some good quality, I suppose you will find out one for me, after Mr. Herbert has taken his ticket."

Mr. Herbert then drew Temperance.

Is it good health you really wish?
Remember, when at table,
To feed alone on simple dish,
Like wise men, in the fable.
For wise men say, and wisely too,
In Temperance is found,
The best physician we can have
To keep us safe and sound.

"I am quite of the poet's opinion," said

Mr. Herbert, "and I shall certainly remember the good advice given me."

Sir Harry's turn was now come, and Charles, with a graceful bow, presented him the remaining characters, from which he drew one, on opening the packet it proved to be Sincerity.

Although your heart sincere may prove,
Although veracity you love;
Though justice fair is your delight,
Your conduct, as your soul, upright;
Unless you make a handsome bow,
We will no favour to you show;
For surely, Sir, you well know how.

The unexpected turn of this latter part, produced a general laugh, and the Baronet said,—"I will try and make one of my best bows, in thanks for the former part of the verses."

Three tickets only now remained to be drawn, after Miss Sophia took her's, which, on opening, proved to be Content, with these lines:—

Who draws me, if not still a child,
Good-temper'd, dutiful, and mild,
Must know Content by more than name,
And innocence is but the same:
And added days with application,
To form your mind, and education;
Learning lessons wise one's give,
Is what will teach you how to live.

"These verses are surely applicable to sister Sophia," cried Charles, "for she is always calm and contented."

"I am quite at a loss," said Sir Harry, "to think how these clever lines have been obtained for the occasion,"

"I have been thinking the same," added Lady Castlemain. "Perhaps, Mr. Wilson can inform us?"

"Really I cannot," replied he, "but I am inclined to think some friend must have assisted Master Charles and the young ladies."

"Well, we will ask no questions to-night," rejoined the Baronet; "and whoever has aided in the business we are much obliged to.—And now, Charles, proceed with the remainder of your Characters."

George Herbert was the next to draw, and found his lot to be—Fortitude.

In Fortitude a shield we find,
That guards us from all harm,
And gives us also peace of mind,
Amidst each rude alarm.

Then Fortitude and Patience join
In amicable band;
The one by Nature is divine,
And given us by command.

"There is now only one lady's ticket remaining," said Charles, "which, of course must be the Queen, as it has not yet been drawn, and this must fall to the lot of one of the younger ladies.—Pray which is it to be?"

This question being answered by Lady Castlemain, the youngest Miss Egerton was made Queen, when the following lines were read to her:—

Little Miss, if such you be,
Little Miss attend to me:
Are you fond of pretty toys?
Fit alone for girls or boys.
Are they brittle? Should they fall,
They are lost for good and all:
Are they painted, gilded fine?
They will last but little time;
Like the toys of riper age,
If new toys your heart engage;
But if books you learn to read,
They will make you wise indeed;
Rich in words, and rich in thought,
Rich in knowledge wisely bought;
You'll surely learn the happy art,
Soon to win and fix the heart.

The last remaining ticket being a gentleman's, Charles said he begged to present it to Mr. Wilson.

This the latter declined, saying, he would bear a part in the amusements without a ticket; he, therefore, desired Charles to take it, who then read as follows:—

Whoever draws this farewel lot,
Shall be the one to prove,
He knows the virtues each have got,
And in what rank they move.
To all mankind we owe these five
That we have briefly sung;
Sweet Charity, and this
In heart, in hand, in tongue.
The next in place is Gratitude,
Which we too can explain;
The third, Benevolence, so good,
That eases all our pain.
And then Sincerity, that speaks
The language of the heart;
That breaks no bonds nor promises,
From Truth does ne'er depart.

Charles said he was very well pleased with his farewel verses; and, making his bow to the company, added, that he had finished with the characters: — But, as three more were wanted for Miss Jane Egerton, Louisa, and Frederic, he could go and write some for them whilst the cake was handed round.

Mr. Wilson then addressing the company, said,—"I have, in looking over some

of the Old Chronicles, found several curious accounts of the antiquity and observance of Twelfth-Day; and, if agreeable, I will read to you the extracts I have made on the subject."

His offer being accepted he proceeded as follows:—

"In the time of King Alfred a law was made, respecting Holydays; by virtue of which, the twelve days after the nativity of our Saviour were made Festivals; and, that our Kings partook of the amusements may be collected from various records, from which circumstance, probably, arose the ceremony of choosing King and Queen. During the festivals of the twelve days, the king went about, disguised, amongst his courtiers, who, in their turn, went to court in masquerade.

"In Fabian's Chronicle, there is the following passage on this subject, from the reign of Henry IV.—'In this pass-time the Dukes of Surrey and Exeter, with the Earl of Salisbury and

others, made provisions for a mummyage, to be shewed to the King, on Twelfth-Night. And Stow has, likewise, given an account of another, in 1377, by the Citizens of London, for the entertainment of young Prince Richard, son of the Black Prince, when one hundred and thirty of the citizens went on horseback, dressed in a fantastic manner, by torch-light, and with various instruments of music playing, to the Palace at Kennington, near Lambeth, where the young prince then was.'

"From these and other testimonials," added Mr. Wilson, "we find that no festivals are of higher antiquity, in our country, than those of the twelve days at Christmas, since they date from the reign of Alfred the Great."

The company expressed their thanks to Mr. Wilson for his information; and the little ones having now finished their drawing, they all proceeded to the ball-room. The old Hall was brilliantly illuminated, the same as on the birth-day, and the

dancing began with the Baronet's taking out Miss Egerton; but after going down one dance with her, he resigned his place to his son Charles, observing, that as there were more young gentlemen than ladies, the old ones would be lookers on.—The conclusion of the evening was no less happy than the beginning, and proved, that even a Ball may be a very pleasant one though only a few young friends meet together; if, like those of the Manor House, they have the wish of being pleasing and amiable.

The departure of friends on the morrow, with the conclusion of the Christmas amusements, was a thought that might, indeed, throw a little damp on the enjoyment of their last evening; but, as each evening brings with it its proportion of happiness, for those who seek to attain what is truly desirable, that of *rational amusement*, the young folks solaced themselves with the thought that their next meeting would be the Summer holydays,

when the country is so beautiful, and they have so many pleasant rides and walks.

On the part of Mr. Herbert, it was truly an affectionate and grateful farewel to Sir Harry and Lady Castlemain, for all their kindnesses to him and his son, who, in this short visit, he said, shewed how much he was indebted to the examples he had met with at the Manor House.

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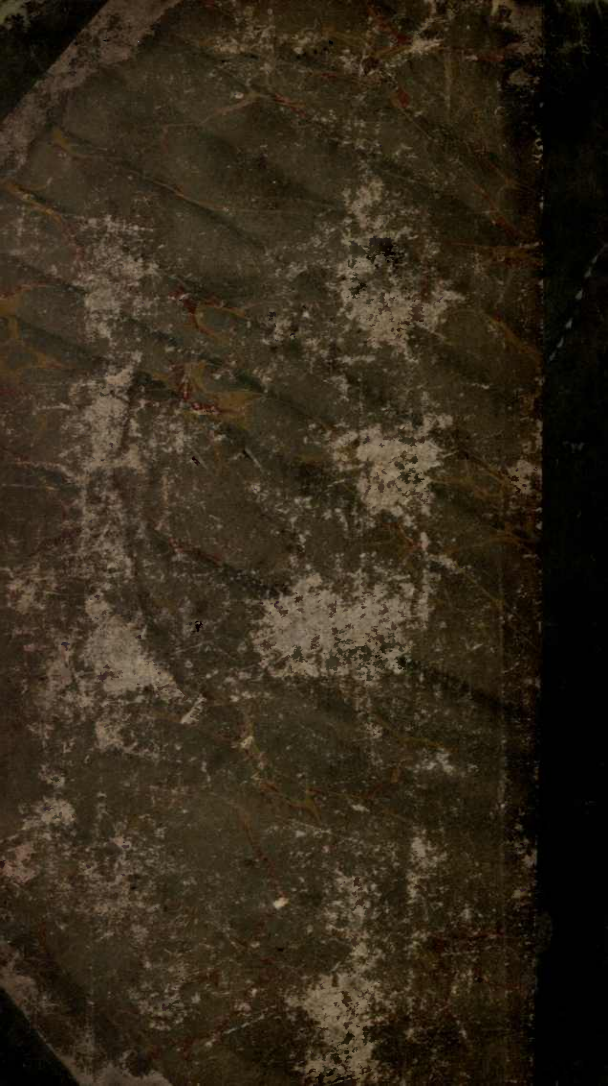
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